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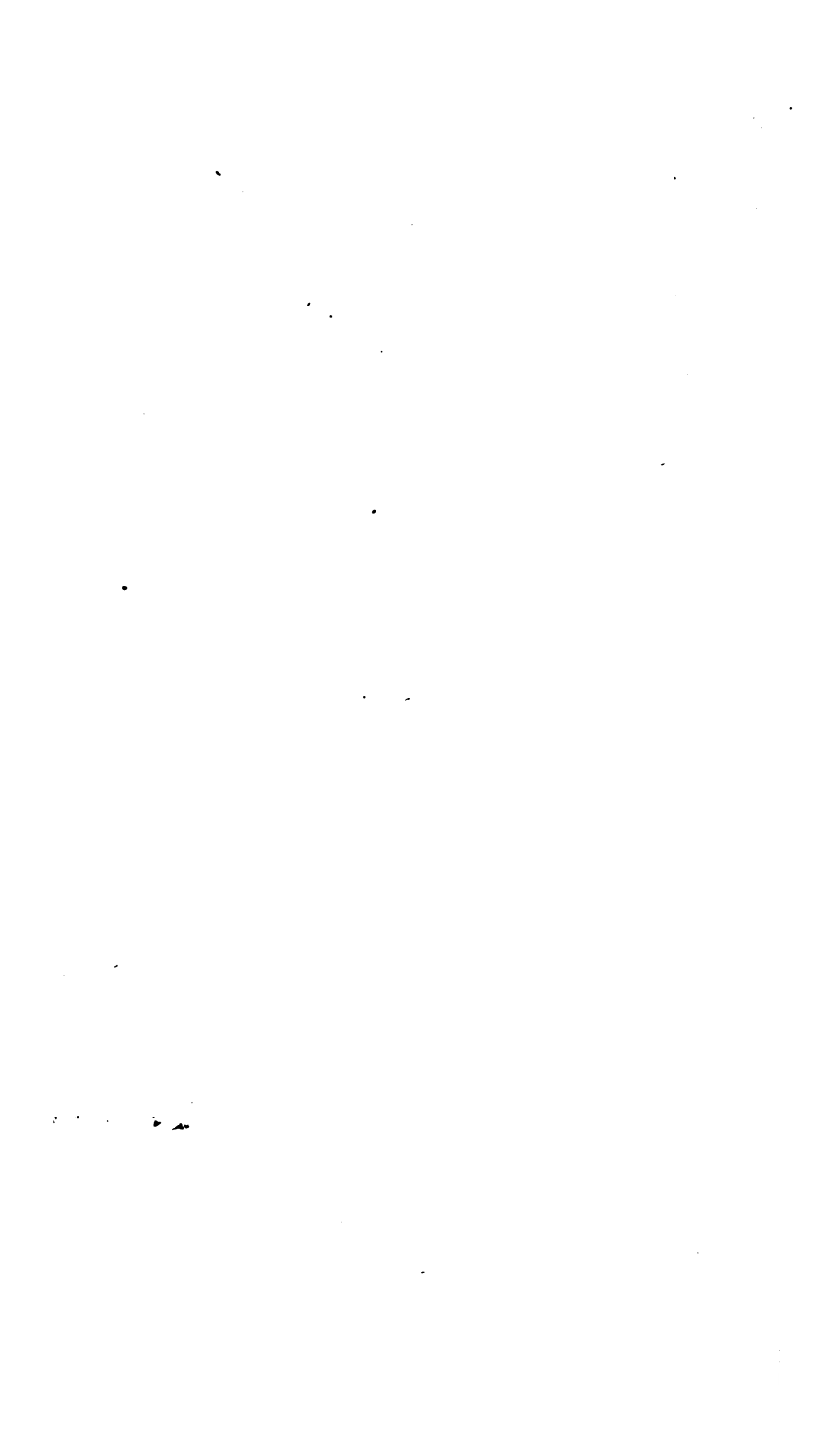
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E D I T H;

OR,

THE LIGHT OF HOME.

EDITH;

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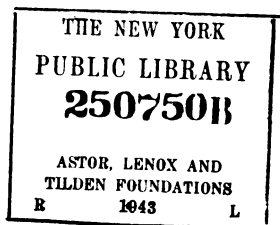
BY ELIZA B. DAVIS.

“ Oh, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give ! ”
SHAKESPEARE.

BOSTON:
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E D I T H.

CHAPTER I.

"Like the daystar in the wave
Sinks a hero to his grave,
'Midst the dewfall of a nation's tears.
Happy is he o'er whose decline
The smiles of home may soothing shine,
And light him down the vale of years;
But, oh, how grand they sink to rest
Whose eyes are closed on Victory's breast!"

Novell 30 Aug. 1843
"OH, Mrs. Courtenay! mamma! do look from the window, and see this beautiful ship coming up the Thames! Do you hear the salute from Tilbury Fort? But her flags are not flying where they usually are; they are half-mast, I believe: what is the reason?" These inquiries were made by a girl twelve years old, as she watched, from the window, the busy scene on the river. She paused; for low sobs from the lady she addressed arrested her attention; and, as she turned towards the sofa, she saw Mrs. Courtenay, pale and agitated, trying to support her half-fainting form against the pillow which rested on the couch.

With the quick instinct of filial affection, connecting the ship with her absent father, she exclaimed, "What is the matter? Papa! papa! — what of him?" Mrs. Courtenay drew the alarmed child towards her, and, folding her in her arms, said, in a low and solemn tone, "Edith, that ship bears all that remains to you of your father. He fell in Canada, in the recent struggle with the United States, as a soldier should die, fighting bravely for his country. You know your father served under Gen. Vincent, at Fort George: it came into the hands of the Americans, and your parent was among the wounded."

Edith lifted her pale face from the bosom of her kind friend, and, bursting into a torrent of tears, exclaimed, "I am, then, alone in the world, — an orphan!"

"Not *alone*, dearest Edith: are not my husband and myself still your guardians and friends? Believe me, my child, we shall try, by every tender and affectionate attention, to supply to you the parents you have lost. Are not my children like brother and sisters to you? I do not wish to check the indulgence of your sorrow, — it is what nature demands for the father who has been taken from you; but I hope the time will come when I shall again see you the happy Edith you have been. You must try to bear this affliction."

"Oh, never, never can I be happy again! My noble father dead! — he whom I loved so fondly.

His remains even now, you tell me, have been permitted by government to be brought home for interment. And I never to look upon him again ! How can you talk to me of ever being happy again ? I am fatherless, motherless ! ”

Mrs. Courtenay saw the uselessness of reasoning with her young charge ; and, begging her to rest on the sofa, she gently covered her with a shawl, and, placing herself near her, watched her anxiously, until nature, exhausted by the intenseness of her grief, found relief in profound repose. Mrs. Courtenay sat by the couch of the afflicted child, gazing with earnestness upon her, as she remained for some time unconscious of the sorrow which had thus suddenly shadowed her happiness, and which she well knew would return, in all its bitterness, when she awoke. An almost impassive calm was on the features of the sleeping girl for an hour ; the lights and shadows which so often played about her intelligent face had departed ; a quiet and almost holy serenity sat on her brow.

CHAPTER II.

“And, as she trod her path aright,
Power from her very garments stole;
For such is the mysterious might
God grants the upright soul.”

MR. COURTENAY was an American by birth, but had spent many years in England in mercantile pursuits. He was a man of a noble nature, high-spirited, and strongly attached to the land of his birth.

In one of his visits to England, he became acquainted with a clergyman's family of the name of Percival. The rector of a church in Kent, Mr. Percival lived in comparative affluence, and had been blessed with two daughters, one of whom, Ellen, had attracted Mr. Courtenay by the charm of manner, and refinement of conversation, which had made her a general favorite. They formed a strong attachment to each other, and, at the period our narrative commences, had been married many years.

Mrs. Courtenay was one of those somewhat rare characters, a finished lady, possessing all the virtues which could adorn a *woman* in the most exalted sense of the word. She had been educated in France,

where she acquired many accomplishments less common in the days of her youth than at present ; had an opportunity, during her residence in a convent, to cultivate a naturally fine mind, and gain that polish of manner so peculiar to the French.

Mrs. Courtenay never forgot the courtesies of life, or the dignity which belonged to her sex. Tender in feeling towards all who needed sympathy, indulgent to the erring, forgiving towards the wayward, she seemed the very spirit of kindness. Her charity was diffusive as the sun. She relieved the wants of the needy far more liberally than many whose ability to do so was greater. A tale of distress never fell unheeded on her ear. Her noble heart warmed towards the suffering. Her purse opened to the destitute, and her words comforted the sorrowful.

In the house of the Courtenays, peace reigned. Mr. Courtenay was a devoted husband, an affectionate father, the sunbeam of his home. He was loved most tenderly by all ; perhaps more intensely from the circumstance of his being at times obliged to visit the United States, leaving his family in England. The shade which rested upon his household during his absence, deepened by a consciousness of the dangers to which he was exposed in crossing the Atlantic, made him of course doubly dear ; and, to his children, no joy was equal to the announcement, " Papa has arrived ! "

Mr. Courtenay's residence was in the quiet town of Milton, on the banks of the Thames, directly

opposite Tilbury Fort, so renowned for the visit of Queen Elizabeth, when she took leave of her admirals and other officers ere they embarked to meet the "Invincible Armada."

Mrs. Strickland says, "The day on which Elizabeth went, in royal pomp and martial array, to visit the camp at Tilbury, has generally been considered the most interesting of her whole life. Never, certainly, did she perform the part of the female leader of an heroic nation with more imposing effect than on this occasion." The situation of this fort was beautiful beyond description: its front stood proudly, with its strong bastions overlooking the Thames; a heavy sea wall; powerful guns, presenting an appearance so impregnable as seemingly to threaten defiance to every thing which might dare approach. This strength and power were beautifully relieved against its groves of oaks, "old as time," its hawthorn hedges, and smiling plains.

The view from Mr. Courtenay's house was of course very lovely, combining so many objects of interest, and animated by the ships which constantly passed to and from London. Between the house and the river were tastefully planned gardens, in which could be found all fruits and flowers, from

"The silvery almond flower,
Which blooms on a leafless tree,"

to the humble violet and gooseberry.

It was delightful to turn from the fortress, and rest the eye on the plants and fruits with which

nature and cultivation had adorned these gardens in prodigal luxuriance. Here were Mr. Courtenay's walks with his family; here both himself and wife loved to pause, amid the enchanting scenery, and direct the minds of their children to serious contemplation, where all about them was so well qualified to awaken a taste for the beauties of nature. Edith was always their companion. Her father, Capt. Dacres, of the British army, had been for many years a warmly attached friend of Mr. Courtenay; and, when death took from him the companion and devoted wife, he confided his motherless little girl to the care of Mrs. Courtenay (her mother's only sister having died some few months after her marriage), and felt perfectly convinced, under the guidance of such a friend, her mother's loss would never be realized.

Mrs. Courtenay had four daughters, — one older, and three younger, than Edith; and one son, her eldest child. The eldest daughter and son were at boarding-school at the commencement of this narrative, but expected home in a few days, as a governess had been temporarily engaged for the girls, till Edith, who had been a delicate child, but who was daily gaining strength of constitution from constant exposure to the air, should be sufficiently robust to endure the trials of boarding-school life. With renovated health came a joyousness of spirit Edith had not hitherto exhibited. Her thoughts, for many weeks, had dwelt upon the general belief that peace between

England and the United States would soon occur, and restore her beloved parent to his country and his child.

Mr. Courtenay had heard, by a recent arrival from Halifax, of a severe wound Capt. Dacres had received, and, with his wife, had been obliged to practise the greatest self-command to conceal from Edith their anxiety and fears for her father's life. A frigate had been for several days expected, which would, in all probability, give some decided information. Her arrival had been delayed at the Nore ; but a letter, written by an officer on board to announce the worst, reached Mr. Courtenay the day before the "Boadicea" passed up the Thames.

"Should I fall, either by the sword or pestilence, I earnestly beg to be brought home for interment," had been the wish expressed by Capt. Dacres when embarking with his regiment for Canada ; and to fulfil this duty to his friend, and to place his remains in the tomb of his cherished wife, as well as to learn the particulars of his last hours, Mr. Courtenay had that morning gone to London.

CHAPTER III.

"It is not length of years which lends
The highest loveliness to those
Whose memory with our being blends,
Whose worth within our bosom glows."

EDITH awoke to a full sense of her irreparable loss. Her first exclamation was, "My papa dead! dead! Am I indeed an orphan?" Her heart echoed the fearful words; and, hiding her face on the shoulder of Mrs. Courtenay, she wept long and bitterly.

Mrs. Courtenay's arms enclosed her, as a precious treasure committed by Heaven to her charge; and, mentally promising never to forget its sacredness, her own tears fell on the glossy ringlets of the afflicted child, as she pressed her to her heart, and whispered sweet words of peace and hope. But these were unheeded; the sobs of Edith amounted almost to convulsions; and her friend thought it best to allow her grief a free indulgence, knowing that nature required this relief of tears, which would probably soon exhaust themselves.

Several days passed before Edith became composed. Her nature was impulsive, and very keenly

alive to every thing in which *feeling* had a share ; her joys or her sorrows were usually in extremes ; and Mrs. Courtenay had often gently but firmly warned her against this excess of sensibility, foreseeing how much it would involve her happiness in after-life. Dwelling, as she necessarily would, upon the uncertainties of a soldier's existence, exposed to danger in every form, she often shuddered as she heard Edith's plans for enjoyment "when papa returns covered with laurels." She never dreamed, poor child ! of the possibility of defeat ; she thought not of the "laurels" the Americans might gather, or the many brows which might be decked with what she ignorantly believed were exclusively the property of Englishmen.

She had always considered her father a hero, — one born to command. The idea that he could be conquered by a foreign foe ; that he could die in a strange land, perhaps without the comforts his situation required, — was too dreadful for her mind to dwell upon.

The officer who had written Mr. Courtenay, to inform him of Capt. Dacres's death, addressed a letter to Edith in a few days after his arrival, in which he feelingly spoke of her father, as a very dear friend, and gave an account of the closing scene of his life : —

"Permit me, my dear young friend, to offer you, on this sorrowful occasion, the sincere sympathy of a heart which loved your father as a brother. After he received the wound, which

soon proved fatal, he often spoke of you, and requested me to write you immediately upon my return to England. His words were, 'It is but four short months since I was in possession of perfect health, and happy in having a darling child, whose expanding mind and ripening virtues would, I hoped, in time, afford me cause for rejoicing in her resemblance to her sainted mother. What am I now? Wounded, defeated, saddened, and about to leave my poor Edith without natural protectors. Though I know the Courtenays will do for her all that kind feeling and affection could suggest, who can be like her father? Let her have this one consolation, that my remains be carried in your ship to England. My dream of happiness has been brief; but I am resigned to the will of Heaven.' When all his brother-officers were oppressed by grief, he would say, 'Do not mourn for me: it is charity to wish me released from the suffering I endure.' The day previous to his death, he took me by the hand, saying, 'Merton, should you see my dear little girl, tell her how much I loved her; how constantly she was in my mind, even to the last; how cheered I have often been by the hope of seeing her at the end of the war: but it was not to be. We shall meet again, I feel we shall, in a brighter world. God bless her!'

"My young friend, I know how heavy your loss must be, and what abundant reason you have to mourn; but I know, too, what cause of gratitude you have in possessing such friends as Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay.

"I hope to see you, when I shall be permitted to leave the 'Boadicea' for a brief visit in Milton. May I not hope to find you calm and submissive?

"Most truly, your friend,

"GEORGE MERTON, R.N."

Soon after the letter, Lieut. Merton came for a few days. He tried to sooth Edith, by every effort, into something like resignation to her father's death; but there were days when she refused all consola-

tion, and even seemed to take pleasure in nourishing her grief. Still, at times she appeared to make great efforts at composure. She would often sit for hours alone in her chamber, gazing on the miniature of her lost parent, and trying to recall every endearing expression he had used, every lesson of advice he had bestowed, ere they parted.

The children of the family were affected by Edith's sadness, as she had hitherto been always ready to aid in their plays after the school-hours were passed. They missed her share in their amusements, but, by their mother's suggestion, refrained from urging her to leave her room until she was perfectly willing ; and it was both strange and pleasant to observe how kindly attentive they were to her whenever in her presence : they loved her as fondly as if she had been in reality their sister.

Time passed slowly in Milton, while Edith continued to sorrow for her father ; but its effect upon her spirits was what it is with all : it softened and subdued her grief ; and, ere many weeks, her naturally cheerful temperament found pleasure in walking with the children, and Jenny, their frequent attendant.

The governess from London arrived, and proved, what governesses usually are, faithful on most occasions to duty, but at times too indulgent ; and when Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay were away, which was sometimes the case, Edith's propensity for works of fiction was most abundantly gratified, and her feelings power-

fully impressed by such works as the "Mysteries of Udolpho," &c., the scenes of which were probably all mysteries to her, except the horror of the heroine on discovering the wax figure of a man, which she supposed a human being who had been murdered in the castle.

This novel, so powerfully delineated by Mrs. Radcliffe, never lost its effect upon the sensitive nature of Edith. She enjoyed the beautiful descriptions of the Alps, the Italian sunsets, and grandeur of the forests: above all, the devoted tenderness of Emily to her invalid father impressed her with so much regret that she was denied the privilege of being with her parent in his last hours. There was a romantic interest thrown around this work, which probably gave coloring to her after-life. She was extravagantly fond of reading; was willing, at any time, to resign the amusements common at her age, to steal into a corner with a book. A *story* always interested her, no matter how improbable, how much at variance with every-day events, were the circumstances detailed. She eagerly devoured it; and never did one doubt of its reality come to destroy the illusion it produced.

Mrs. Courtenay often regretted this fondness for reading, as she could not always direct Edith's choice of books. Her only hope was, the natural strength of her intellect would struggle through the *mist* of error by which she was surrounding herself. She knew the stern realities of life would in time teach

her all was not *couleur de rose* ; and she almost dreaded to awaken her from her dreamy enjoyment of poetry and fiction while in the early hours of her existence. Had Edith been other than an adopted daughter, her course would have been more decided.

CHAPTER IV.

“ As the sweet flower which scents the morn,
But withers in the rising day,
Thus lovely seemed the infant's dawn,
Thus swiftly fled her life away.”

MISS TAYLOR, the governess, remained but a few months at Mr. Courtenay's ; for she disputed supremacy with Jenny, the autocrat of the nursery, and continual scenes of warfare disturbed the hitherto peaceful family. This, however, was not the sole cause for Miss Taylor's removal. Jenny was unquestionably the favorite with the children : *she* had no lessons to teach ; *she* made no efforts to have them speak with grammatical accuracy ; and they were heartily glad when Miss Taylor left, and they were for a time sent to a day-school.

To keep in favor with Jenny was a very important consideration, as there were many ways in which she could promote the children's happiness by indulgence, or their discomfort by her displeasure.

She had many valuable traits of character, a naturally strong mind, and faithfulness to what she considered duty ; but, like many persons invested with

power, she at times exercised it to its fullest extent. She had the care of Mrs. Courtenay's children beyond the limits usually allowed domestics. Perhaps Mrs. Courtenay erred in permitting such an ascendancy over them ; but she saw and knew the eminent qualities of head and heart Jenny possessed, and felt they would guard her from taking advantage of her position.

Jenny often walked with the little girls. She had so much innate taste as to select the most picturesque regions for their rambles, and would direct Edith's attention to objects of interest, if only the trunk of an aged tree, on which moss was collected, or the dark ivy was twining. Her inclination frequently led her to old churches, ruins, &c., of which there were many in the neighborhood. But the favorite walk was to Windmill Hill, about a mile from Milton, where the children used to talk with the miller, watch the mill in motion, and then run to gather cowslips, violets, and primroses, to carry home to mamma, as the first offerings of spring. How many times would Edith kneel upon the grass, search for early violets, attracted by their perfume to the spot where the flowers were modestly concealed ! How exultingly she would lift her head, shake back her dark curls, and hold up a bunch of her treasures for Jenny to admire, as they glittered with dew, and sparkled like diamonds in the sunlight ! And then the joy of offering them to her dear mamma, of receiving her sweet smile and a fond kiss, — it was all Edith needed to fill up the

measure of delight, even after thinking and saying, "No, I *never* can be happy again!"

At the foot of Windmill Hill stood a cottage, neatly thatched, and nearly covered in front with creeping vines. A short distance from it were some noble elms, rich in spring foliage. Here the little girls often stopped to rest, and be refreshed by a draught of milk. Ellen, the eldest daughter, would laughingly tell the old cottager that her papa "came from America, where the people were all copper-colored Indians, except a very few white men." The poor woman would stare, and lift up her hands in wonder that there could be such a race of men. The mystery of how Mr. Courtenay came to be *white*, or the Indians copper-color, she never solved. It was hardly justifiable in Ellen thus to mislead the good cottager; but, as she said, "there was so much fun in witnessing her astonishment and credulity, it was irresistible."

In one of these excursions, when the youngest child in the family was about three years and a half old, Jenny went toward Milton Church, to admire its ivy-clad walls; its solemn yews, and memorials of the dead; its luxuriant growth of grass, and abundance of daisies which bloomed in the churchyard. Little Emma was frolicking before the party, looking like a cherub in her loveliness, her flaxen curls floating in the breeze, and the silvery tones of her voice ringing in a merry laugh, when a bird suddenly flitted before her, and, after a brief strug-

gle, expired at her feet. With a countenance of deeply solemn expression, Jenny exclaimed, "Death is among us!" Edith was struck by her tone and manner, as calculated to affect the children, and said to her, very impatiently, "Why, Jenny, how superstitious you are! What would mamma say to your talking so foolishly?"

"Wait, Miss Edith," replied the excited Jenny, "it may not be superstition, after all; at any rate, you need not have spoken so sharp: we believe in such things, in Wales, as signs."

"I did not mean to be *sharp*," said Edith; "but I was sorry to hear you speak as you did before the children. I know you do not actually believe in omens, dear Jenny."

There was no reply to Edith's remark.

Jenny's words were prophetic.

In one short week, the beautiful bright child, the idol of the household, was dead, and, reverently be it said, "stood an angel at the throne of her God."

Emma was taken suddenly ill on the following Sunday morning. Jenny carried her into Mrs. Courtenay's sleeping-room, saying the child complained of pain in her head and back. The affrighted mother saw, in the changed aspect of the little girl, that Death had set his seal on her brow: her countenance was ghastly pale; her eyelids closed; she seemed entirely unconscious of the efforts made to rouse her.

Medical advice was immediately procured; every

thing which the united skill of physicians could do was tried; but in vain. By seven o'clock in the evening, she had ceased to breathe.

This sudden event threw the household into the deepest affliction, particularly the bereaved parents; for, being the youngest, Emma very naturally was the pet and plaything. Her personal beauty made her very attractive; but her exceeding sweetness of disposition intertwined her round the hearts of all. The blank made by her death was not to be filled.

"That form so fair, those eyes so bright,
Are laid in hallowed ground;
And over them the church-bell chimes
A peaceful requiem sound."

CHAPTER V.

" 'Tis ever thus, 'tis ever thus, with creatures heavenly fair, —
Too finely framed to bide the brunt more earthly natures bear :
A little while they dwell with us, blest ministers of love ;
Then spread the wings we had not seen, and seek their homes above."

On the Sunday of Emma's illness, as the physicians feared her symptoms were of an aggravated case of scarlet-fever, and Edith had never been exposed to any infectious disease, the latter was sent out of town to a little village called Northfleet. Her residence was in the family of a Mrs. Baker, — a widow, with two daughters and a son, highly respectable, intelligent people. The cottage was one of those picturesque dwellings so common in England, so often described, but always interesting ; its front covered with the honeysuckle and eglantine ; the entrance gay with the scarlet geranium and purple bergamot, which grew at each side of the door, and diffused their fragrance through the house.

The owner of this pretty cottage had been a miller : his widow, with the aid of her son, still carried on the mill ; and he, every morning, might be seen

" To heave the powdered sacks, and grind the corn."

The two daughters assisted their mother in household duties : the younger kept also a little school. Henrietta was a lovely girl, far superior to the station she filled ; one of those meek and gentle beings, whose very presence seemed to diffuse happiness around her. She devoted herself to Edith during her stay, ever finding means of soothing her anxiety about home, and waiting upon her as assiduously and affectionately as upon a younger sister.

Notwithstanding the efforts to keep Edith's mind tranquil, it was cause for surprise and anxiety that she received no information from Milton of the progress of Emma's illness. The subject was dwelt upon as little as possible by the family ; and, feeling there might be satisfactory reasons for their silence, she waited patiently until some information should be given.

One evening, as she knelt by her bedside, offering, in low tones, her petition to Heaven for the child's restoration, Henrietta stole softly behind her, and, gently placing her hand on the bowed head, whispered, "It is well with the child." Edith raised her eyes beseechingly to her : "Do you mean she is recovering ? or" — And her voice, choked by her emotions, forbade further utterance.

"Dear Edith," said Henrietta, "you will soon know all : our silence has been in accordance with your mamma's request, to save you pain. Jenny will be here in a day or two ; and I beg you to be tranquil until then."

"I will try to be tranquil, because it is mamma's wish ; but I think this suspense is very hard to be borne. I would infinitely rather know the worst."

On the following Sunday, Jenny arrived, laden with affectionate messages from Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay ; but Emma was not named.

Jenny, as usual, wished to go to the churchyard for a walk. Edith and Henrietta accompanied her. She seated herself on a low monument, and, as the day was warm, took off her bonnet, when the *white* ribbon on her cap told the sad tale of Emma's death. Edith burst into tears. A solemn silence pervaded the spot, unbroken for some minutes, except by the soft whispering of the breeze among the yews. Jenny tried to check Edith's sorrow, by telling her how well Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay bore their affliction, and how much exertion the children made to suppress their grief for their parents' sake : but Edith could not refrain from the indulgence of her feelings for the loss of the sweet child she had loved so fondly ; and she continued to weep, until Jenny informed her Mr. Courtenay would come for her the next day, as the physicians thought, whatever might have been Emma's disease, no danger of contagion now existed.

The next day, Mr. Courtenay arrived : his radiant smile was gone ; a deep shade was on his brow ; and, as he pressed Edith fondly in his arms, she felt a tear on her cheek. The firm man, the strongly disciplined mind, were subdued ; and long and silently they clung to each other in their mutual grief.

Mr. Courtenay's life had been a very prosperous one, and this might be said to be his first real sorrow. Language has no words to express his deep feeling on the occasion. It was the first time death had been brought home to him; and to have it fall upon a being he loved so fondly, had overcome him so completely, that years seemed to have been added to his life. But no murmur escaped his lips; he never spoke of his lost Emma; and probably, from the effort he made to control all outward semblance of sorrow, the deeper was his internal suffering.

When Edith arrived at home, she was inexpressibly shocked by the change in her adopted mother's appearance: the anguish in her heart had spread itself to her countenance. She received Edith very affectionately, and, kissing her fondly, said, "You will, I know, understand all I suffer. Ellen has often wished you with us during the sad week after Emma's death; but I feared to expose you to any thing like contagion. My other children, you know, have had the scarlet-fever; but for you, dearest Edith, I feel a double responsibility."

"O mamma!" said Edith, "I should have been so glad to have been with you and dear Ellen at such a time! I know I could have done a little towards comforting you. And then Ellen has had a sad satisfaction I can never know: she saw Emma before she was taken away; had the privilege of kissing her pale cheek, of giving her a last look."

"It is better as it is," said Mrs. Courtenay; "you

now remember her in the full bloom of health and loveliness. Though her illness was so brief, it changed her very much: the lustre of her bright eyes was gone; the evidences of approaching death were so strong as to make even me feel it painful to look upon her."

"O dear, dear mamma, how you must have suffered!" And the affectionate Edith clasped her mother's neck, and kissed her pale cheek again and again, in token of her sympathetic tenderness.

Ellen at this moment entered the room, and, turning to Mrs. Courtenay, said, "Mamma, I do not believe any one of the family grieves more sincerely for the loss of little Emma than Jenny. I found her this morning, in her chamber, kneeling before an open trunk, and taking from it a pair of little morocco shoes and a frock, which I knew you had given her: she kissed them most fervently, while the tears fell fast over her treasures. When she saw me, she made every effort to hide her feelings. I begged her not to practise any restraint, as *I* should love her more for the love she bore my sweet sister."

"O Miss Ellen!" she said, "I cannot realize dear little Emma is gone. It seems to me now that nothing on earth can interest me as she did: my affection was all given to her."

"I believe she spoke only the truth," replied Mrs. Courtenay, "or the truth as it appears to her; for her attachment to Emma was of very unusual depth ;

and if any thing could add to the confidence I already feel in this devoted girl, it would be her affection for my lost one, her consideration for my feelings, as she always checks any outbreak in my presence."

Mrs. Courtenay's strong mind urged her onward in the course of duty towards her other children, though the loss of Emma fell heavily on her heart. She made redoubled efforts to promote their happiness, and to sustain her husband's drooping spirits. Her thoughts would often wander back to her departed child, would bring vividly before her the scene of her sudden death, but always in meek submission to "Him who doeth all things well."

CHAPTER VI.

“And some there are who hail the rising morn,
Pluck its gay flowers, and taste its opening bloom,
Who, ere a cloud obscures the infant dawn,
Unsullied, sleep within the peaceful tomb.
But happier thou, though called in early youth,
Not unmatured, by sickness gently led,
To seek the bright, immortal path of truth,
And rest on Love Divine thy aching head.”

AMONG the enjoyments of Mrs. Courtenay's children was visiting a lady who had been like a mother to Mrs. Courtenay, and whom the children called grand-mamma.

A little girl resided with her, whose mother, Mrs. Harcourt's only daughter, had died, leaving her an infant of a few days old, and whose father, so deeply immersed in business as to be seldom with his child, was, at the time of which we speak, in Malta.

This little girl was naturally the idol of her be-reaved grandparent, and an object of great interest to the little Courtenays and Edith. She was exceedingly lovely, possessing an innate dignity and grace in every movement, which often led people to say she was “born a duchess.” Her manners were at

times very courteous ; but she could be somewhat despotic, — the result of her peculiar position.

Margaret Granville selected the younger children to be more particularly her companions, as she called Ellen “too old,” and Edith “too grave.” Caroline Courtenay, a laughing, dark-eyed, roguish child, was always full of mischief and fun ; while the disposition of Marion, who possessed more personal beauty, was so quiet and docile, that, with her, one kind word was sufficient to induce compliance with any requisition.

Ellen, — what can be said of Ellen, with her lustrous blue eyes and flaxen hair ?

“Never did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face.”

She was all her fond parents could desire in a child, — kind, affectionate, gentle, well-disciplined, and obedient to every wish.

Edward, the only son, was a fine-looking boy, manly, brave, and generous ; but very quick-tempered, impulsive, and but too easily influenced by those around him. He had been kept very constantly at school, a few miles from home, as the town of Milton afforded no facilities for his education.

Edith seemed unlike any of these children in her nature ; but, from living so long among them, she had acquired many of their tastes, and assimilated with them in all important affairs. She was, at times, very independent, it might be said haughty.

She disliked all restraint, — shrank from contradiction or opposition. An *order* she never would have obeyed ; but a request, mildly given, she delighted to grant ; and, if at times betraying some degree of waywardness, her orphan state came to the hearts of all, pleading apologies for her. Her nature was so generous, so open, there was so much versatility in her character, she was loved wherever she was known. Her disposition was so grateful, that not a “ray of sunshine which beamed across her path, or single blessing which gladdened her home,” ever failed to awaken thoughts of thankfulness for possessing (young as she was) a mind to appreciate all the gifts Heaven had so indulgently bestowed.

Edith was not what is called beautiful ; for the charm of her face consisted in its variety rather than in its regularity of features. Her color rose or faded with every emotion ; she could look proudly and sternly, or wear a smile of ineffable sweetness ; her mouth was indisputably beautiful ; and the pearly whiteness of her teeth, when her lips parted, was dazzling. Her complexion was perhaps not fair enough to afford a contrast to dark eyes and hair ; but her form, even in childhood, was regally imposing in its contour.

Many bright and joyous days were spent at Mrs. Harcourt’s. The good old lady was ever anxious to promote the happiness of the children ; and to her they were indebted for many valuable lessons of love to God, obedience to their parents, and kindness to

each other. Her far-searching mind seemed to have an intuitive sense, that to cultivate these feelings would be more than commonly important to some of them in after-life ; that their young days were to be clouded by adversity, and the energies of their characters very early quickened into operation.

To Edith she often said, "Cultivate your mind, to afford never-failing resources in adversity ; lay up a store of useful information, to avail you when the world shall lose its attractions." This was not the highest stimulus to improvement ; but it increased her ambitious desire to attain some degree of superiority over her young companions.

The cloud which had but recently darkened the horizon of Mr. Courtenay's domestic happiness had scarcely given place to the sunlight of tranquillity when it gathered again, prostrating on a bed of illness the eldest daughter, Ellen. She had been again at boarding-school for a few weeks, and returned to spend a brief vacation, when she and Edith one morning proposed going to a friend's house, a little way out of town, to spend the day.

While walking in the garden, she complained of slight pain in her head, which was supposed to be occasioned by fatigue. Edith urged her to go into the house, and rest on a sofa ; but the pain increased, and it was considered best to send her home in the carriage, with one of the young ladies of the family in addition, to explain to Mrs. Courtenay the reason of her sudden return, and to report how she

bore the ride. Her mother, alarmed by her flushed cheek and the unnatural brilliancy of her eyes, sent immediately for medical advice. The physician expressed fears of typhoid-fever, yet hoped, by timely aid, to check its progress. But she grew rapidly worse: her mind often wandered alternately to school and its studies, to flowers and rural enjoyments: she sometimes spoke cheerfully of her recovery, and then sank into a stupor, not recognizing either parent; frequently called for Edith, then seemed bewildered as to who she was.

Edith, although against the earnest entreaties of Mrs. Courtenay, resolutely stood by the bedside of her young friend, bathed her burning brow, kissed her flushed cheek, and smoothed the fair ringlets as they hung in disorder, while the patient turned restlessly from pillow to pillow.

A consultation of physicians was called: they pronounced her apparently beyond the reach of human aid. When their opinion was made known to Mrs. Courtenay, she seemed powerless in her grief. Her identity was lost in the tide of sorrow which was overwhelming her; and for hours she could not be persuaded to leave the bedside of the suffering girl,—holding a hand firmly grasped within her own, gazing on the altered form which lay almost motionless on the bed, and, in an agony of prayer, beseeching Heaven to spare this cherished object of her affection. Her faith seemed strengthened by every effort and aspiration, till she gradually

began to feel, that, whether granted or denied, the petition would be answered only by Wisdom unerring.

Mr. Courtenay, entirely unable to attend to business, remained at home, hovering about the sick chamber, or shut up in the library with the two little girls, who, by their caresses, tried to soothe his affliction.

The last hour of life came. In a fortnight from the day Ellen was attacked, she expired in her mother's arms, — passed quietly away without a sigh.

Only one year, one short year, and the afflicted parents stood on the same spot where they had consigned the mortal remains of little Emma. The plants, the shrubs, in the churchyard, had bloomed and died but once, and were just bursting again into life, when the green sod was to be placed over another grave, — the grave of a lovely, blooming girl, bright in intellect, endearing from the sweetness of her disposition and gentleness of temper, and who was in the full flush of health and enjoyment only fourteen days previous to her death. "Pray for me," said Mr. Courtenay to his wife, "pray for me, Ellen, that I may bear this weight of woe as becomes a Christian and a man. I have consigned my child to her last home on earth: may God give me strength to bear the trial!" Mrs. Courtenay clasped her husband's hand, and, resting her head on his shoulder, said to him, in gentle and subdued tones, "Comfort will come to us."

CHAPTER VII.

"Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, —
Seats of my youth, when every charm could please!
How often have I paused on every charm! —
The sheltered cot; the cultivated farm;
The never-falling brook; the busy mill;
The decent church, that topped the neighboring hill;
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made." — GOLDSMITH.

THE startling effect of Ellen's death on the hearts of her adopted parents Edith never realized, as, on the day of the funeral, she was taken ill with the same fever, and, for several weeks, was unconscious of attention, or any thing that passed around her.

To all outward appearance, she was more severely ill than Ellen. Her brain, the seat of the disease, was so much disordered, that Dr. Harris feared she never could be sound in mind, even if her life were spared.

Poor Mrs. Courtenay! how bitterly did she lament not having insisted upon her leaving home, not having denied her the sad indulgence for which she had so urgently pleaded, — of ministering to Ellen!

Every morning, Grandmamma Harcourt sent to make inquiries for the poor invalid, almost hoping

to hear all was over ; but daily came back the messenger with tidings of "no change."

The physicians still said, "We fear she will never have her intellect in full power ;" but it was not so to be. Reason began slowly to dawn on Edith's benighted mind ; the objects around her began to grow familiar. Her first clear perception of any thing was Mrs. Courtenay's beautiful countenance, as she bent over the bed, and Mr. Courtenay's face, lighted up by hope. She tried to extend her hand, — it fell powerless on the bed ; but she murmured the name of "Mamma! dear mamma!" What music to her friends was in that word! what joy in the recognition! They stooped to imprint a kiss on the pale cheek, on which rested the dark lashes of her closed eyes, and, for the first time, indulged hope of her restoration.

Jenny came towards the bed, — dear, kind Jenny, — and, as she smoothed the pillow, her tears fell like raindrops on the invalid's face : she had been a devoted nurse, and watched every turn of the fever with the anxiety and tenderness of a mother. Slowly, but visibly, Edith improved ; and, ere the spring had entirely passed, she was able to sit at a window, gazing delightedly at the flowers in the garden, and watching the busy scene on the Thames, as the ships passed to and from London. The sound of the *revéillé* at the fort, the band in the evening, the sunset gun, all came to her across the river with the familiar tones of long-cherished association. Her

face was still pale and thin ; her luxuriant curls had been taken off during her delirium ; but each returning day seemed to restore her more and more to her former self.

The children were so delighted at her amendment, they were continually testifying their joy by bringing her bouquets, &c. Margaret Granville would often read to her, or tell long stories of her father's travels in the Mediterranean, and exhibit his gifts from the different islands.

When sufficiently recovered to be removed, she went on a visit to some friends of Mrs. Courtenay at Glendale Farm, the residence of Mr. Leslie. She had known this family for some time, had often passed days there, but had never made a visit of any length. It proved a period of happiness she never forgot. Its early days were saddened, it is true, by the remembrance of Ellen ; but her own rescue from death had been so almost miraculous that it softened the distress she had otherwise felt. She cherished the memory of her adopted sister ; deeply sympathized with her heart-broken mother : but there was so much vitality in her own nature, so intense a love for the country, that very soon her joyous feelings returned, and she bloomed again in health and brightness.

The family at Glendale Farm consisted of Mr. Leslie, two daughters, and one son. The last was a pupil of Eton School ; the elder daughter, Mary, was at the head of her father's house ; the younger,

about twelve years old, was at home for the holidays. They all welcomed Edith on her arrival, as a very precious charge, knowing how anxiously Mrs. Courtenay had watched over her. They devoted themselves to her, exerting every effort to amuse her, and divert her thoughts from her recent illness, and the affliction of her friends at home.

The house was somewhat old in its style of architecture; but its internal arrangement of furniture, pictures, and all tasteful ornaments, would have satisfied the most fastidious. It was situated in a beautiful and fertile region, embracing extensive views. There is a peculiar softness over the scenery in Kent: it has been compared to "a beautiful face seen through a gauze veil." The misty climate causes vegetation to retain the rich green so late, and assume it so early, it is quite delightful. The cultivation of the fields, nearly everywhere to be seen, and, from the chamber appropriated to Edith, the luxuriance of all around, filled her with delight. The gardens, too, so tastefully arranged; the distant church, so venerable and ivy-clad, so picturesque in its situation; the woods for a background; the village footpath, with its stiles leading to the church; and, at a little distance, a ruin, the remnant of other times, with its broken arch and gateway, — all seemed to combine to thrill her heart with rapture too exquisite for words; and when Mary Leslie would look with her on this landscape, by the light of the setting sun, she would clasp her round the neck, and

only say, " Oh, what a paradise ! How spiritless every other place must look to you ! "

" It is always a lovely region," said Mary ; " but I have looked upon its beauties for many years, Edith, and of course do not feel as enthusiastic as you, to whom all wears the charm of novelty."

Near Mr. Leslie's residence were many pretty cottages, — thatched with straw, and often covered with the eglantine, scarlet honeysuckle, and jasmine, — several of them occupied by Mr. Leslie's tenants.

Arthur volunteered to be Edith's escort in her early walks. They often, after a long stroll, would stop at one of these humble dwellings for a draught of milk, and as often lend a willing ear to a tale of sorrow from the mother of a sick child, or of joy from some happy old cottager, whose little garden gave promise of abundance.

The noble boy, the heir of this estate, had a heart which warmed in sympathy to all around him. His manners were so endearing, " none knew him but to love him." He was very anxious to do every thing for Edith's comfort ; gathered flowers for her ; and, in boyish gallantry, often tossed them on her beautiful hair, the luxuriance of which had been rapidly restored after her recovery. He would laughingly say to her, —

" You are not fair enough for a Flora, but would make a famous Dryad, particularly as the Dryads were sometimes only genii, *never* goddesses."

"Well," Edith would reply, "my imagination would never transform you to Pan, though mamma says it is very fertile, which she thinks makes me so fond of studying mythology; but, Arthur, I can fancy you — not Apollo or Narcissus, but I believe you might be a Leander: you seem as if you had energy enough to swim the Hellespont."

"It would depend," he replied, "upon who was my Hero; and whether the night were moonlight and warm, or cold and stormy. I am afraid my courage would quail before a gale of wind and rough sea; so never flatter yourself you will be ever any thing but the *Heroine* my imagination."

"I hate puns," said Edith; "I have not quickness enough to apply them as promptly as they are spoken: do not practise them on me; please, Arthur, don't!"

"Your request shall be obeyed," he hastily answered. "I know exactly how you feel: you do not wish I should hold your intellect in so little esteem."

"Do you think me conceited?" she asked.

"No: I think you are just what I should like you to be, were you my sister."

"Thank you, Arthur; that is exactly what I should like to have you *say*, what I should like to have you *feel*. I have no real brothers and sisters; but the Courtenays are all very dear to me. Edward is so much away, I know less of him than of his sisters, who are lovely little girls. Could you only have known Ellen, I am sure you would have loved her."

“ Was she like you, Edith ? ”

“ Like me ! No, indeed : she was all gentleness and sweetness, so calm and so beautiful. Why, papa used to tell me, as he rubbed his hand over my dark curls, I would make a famous Indian, and advised me to learn to play bow-and-arrow. But, Arthur, we have been walking a long time, and your sister Mary will wonder where we are. Let us go home : my drawing and lessons must not be neglected for these happy walks ; nor must your Latin, as you are soon to return to Eton. I shall miss you.”

Days glided peacefully on, — few shadows on them, — usually lighted by the sun of tranquil enjoyment, in the affectionate attentions lavished upon our heroine ; the tender consideration for occasional fretfulness the remote effect of her long illness.

Edith was no faultless character. She possessed a quickness of temper, which would at times exhibit itself in a sharp or haughty reply. On one occasion, when Mary Leslie had ventured to advise her upon the subject of novel-reading, to point out the injury it might prove, as spoiling her taste for reading of a higher order, history, &c., she received the advice very coolly, and, rising from her seat with what she considered great dignity, and tossing back her curls, said, rather haughtily, “ Would you confine me to stupid history ? — allow me to think of nothing but old Greeks, Romans, and such characters ? I don’t fancy such dry reading ; I hate old times.” With this elegant remark on her lips, she passed up stairs

into the library, seated herself at an open window, and cried with vexation at being advised to leave Corinne just as she had reached the Capitol, — *la charmante* Corinne, her model of a woman. She had sat some minutes, when a soft step near the door caused her to turn, and Arthur stood before her, with a chaplet in his hand. He approached her, as if to place it on her hair. This moved the better part of her nature to repentance. She possessed integrity of character sufficient to feel her unworthiness of such a gift at that moment; and in bitterness she exclaimed, “Oh, no, Arthur! — no, no!” and, passing hastily by him, rushed into the parlor, where Mary was dejectedly seated at work.

“Forgive me, forgive me, Miss Leslie, I beg! I am so sorry I dared to speak to you as I did, — you who are so kind to me!”

Mary readily granted the petition for forgiveness. No outbreaks of temper were exhibited during the remainder of her visit.

Edith learned many valuable lessons of self-government from Mary. She became more patient under what she often considered personal remarks, and had a greater desire to be loved. She had been, at Mrs. Courtenay’s, so ceaseless an object of attention, that she had not taken much pains to conciliate affection, and usually claimed all she received as her due.

Arthur’s example, too, now unconsciously affected her. The calm dignity he possessed, for one so young; the perfect sweetness of his disposition; his

kind attentions to her ; his patient forbearance whenever she had been irritated ; his readiness to oblige, even at the sacrifice of his own feelings, — could not fail to impress her sensitive nature ; and she insensibly learned to consider him her guide in all their plans for amusement, and her counsellor in all difficulties in which she might be involved.

CHAPTER VIII.

"The hollow dash of waves, the ceaseless roar!

Be still, thou sea-bird, with thy clanging cry!

My spirit sickens as thy wing sweeps by.

The heavy-rolling surge, the rocking mast:

Hush! give my dream's deep music way, thou blast!

The white foam dashes high! Away! away!

Shroud the green land no more, thou blinding spray!"

EDITH was soon expected at Mr. Courtenay's; yet she lingered day after day, unwilling to leave scenes so hallowed by tenderness, so picturesque in their loveliness, even for *home*. The beautiful village of Glendale — one of those truly English villages, with its church which "points its taper spire to heaven;" its thatched cottages and green lawns; its old mill; its banks covered with primroses, cowslips, and "lords and ladies," which grew near brooks gurgling through meadows — had become so dear to her, that she felt reluctant to give them up, even while she knew her presence was needed in Mrs. Courtenay's family, to supply, in some degree, the place of Ellen. Her health, too, was perfectly established; and what excuse was there to prolong her stay? She could draw at home, even if Arthur were not there to cor-

rect her faults in perspective, Matilda to share her studies, or Mary to stimulate her efforts by judicious praise.

At the thought of her mother, left with only the younger children during her husband's business-visits in London, her heart smote her for being so selfishly fond of Glendale, when hitherto Milton had been all in all to her.

Her love of nature had been strengthened by frequent walks and drives with Mary, — a highly cultivated and intelligent woman, who took pleasure in directing Edith's attention to objects of interest, and, by her well-chosen remarks, impressing them indelibly on her memory. They often strolled, towards sunset, to some secluded spot, where Mary would repeat passages from Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and recognize, amid the many voices which fell upon her ear from a distance, "the swain responsive as the milkmaid sung;" or, in the aged woman by the brook, —

"that widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beneath the plashy spring, —
The wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread."

But the hour of parting came; the last words were to be spoken. Poor Edith! she wept on Mary's neck, kissed Matilda again and again, and blushing bade farewell to Arthur as he shook her by the hand. He detained it for a moment; and, as she turned her large dark eyes to his face, she

saw his own glistening, as if tearful. Mr. Leslie gave her a hearty embrace. "Don't forget us!" was echoed through the hall. The carriage drove off: she was gone!

We may be forgiven for saying we could dwell upon this period of Edith's life a little longer: it was a beautiful episode; and who would not linger over happy days of girlhood, particularly when passed in England, with all its associations of picturesque beauty, its cottages, flowers, and hawthorn hedges? But the reader (should we find one) may, after all, weary of such endless descriptions. For the present, then, we will leave them.

Edith's arrival in Milton was hailed by all with great joy. Hardly could it be believed the bright, animated being who sprang from the carriage, and stood in the hall, was the pale, attenuated girl, who, but a few weeks previous, had left it so wearily. The air of Glendale, — how it had improved her! Marion lifted one of her jetty ringlets, and exclaimed, "See, mamma, how her hair has grown! and what a beautiful black it is!" She was turned round by all, Jenny not excepted, gazed upon, and kissed, as if she had been gone a year.

A feeling of reproach throbbed at her heart as she remembered her regret at leaving Glendale, — regret to be restored to beings who loved her so fondly. Could she have been so ungrateful? In the impulse of remorseful feeling at her selfishness, she threw herself into her mother's arms, and, with tearful

eyes, said, "Dearest mamma! how grateful I am for this heartfelt welcome, when I have been such a truant!" Her mother drew her closer to her heart, and said, "My dear girl, I have indeed missed you; but I knew you were so happy at Glendale, I had not the courage to ask you to return."

"Well," I mean to stay at home for a long time" — At that moment Caroline whispered, "Edith, you and I are going to boarding-school soon." A cloud was on her brow: she shuddered. How was she to bear school-discipline after the teaching of Mary and Arthur? Her heart sank for a time; but, finding that what was called *soon* would not be until the autumn, she determined to enjoy all she could before the dreaded period should arrive.

Spring had yielded to summer; and Mr. Courtenay decided to pass the hot weather at Margate. There was great delight with the children in helping pack the trunks, and assisting in other preparations for the visit to the seaside. When all was accomplished, and they stepped on board the yacht which was to convey them to Margate, their joy knew no bounds. Every thing was so new, so beautiful, the arrangements for the trip so convenient; and then the cabin, the bustle on deck, the singing voices of the sailors as they prepared for sea, the heaving of the anchor, &c., had such charms, they all felt as if in an enchanted palace, floating on the waves. But some of the party, soon realizing they were at sea, were glad to go below, and crawl into their berths,

and acknowledged, when they landed on Margate pier, they were "glad the voyage was over."

A handsome and beautifully situated house, ready furnished, had been engaged. The family were soon settled, and all but Mrs. Courtenay bright and cheerful. Her afflicted spirit sought consolation where alone it is to be found; and, as she moved quietly and calmly in the performance of duty in her family, strangers would have called her happy: but there was an eye which penetrated the recesses of her heart, and knew how deeply she sorrowed for her children. She had, perhaps, loved Ellen with a more devoted affection than she was aware. She had always been very proud of this daughter, as a child of uncommon promise. She had beheld her, a sweet, bewitching little girl, engaging in the rudiments of her education with all the ardor of youth and genius, — gay, innocent, void of care, looking forward to a long life of health and happiness. She had seen her full of youth and beauty, the delight of the family circle; had watched the insidious approaches of disease; had seen her beauty fade away; had sat by her bedside through her brief but wasting illness; had witnessed her patience and calmness; and had received her last sigh on her bosom. Was it strange that thought should sometimes be agony?

The out-of-doors life of the young people was perfect in its enjoyment. Part of every day was given to walking on the "Sands," where they would spend an hour or two gathering marine plants, or collecting

shells. They were always accompanied by Edith; and, whenever Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay were unable to be with them, Jenny acted as attendant, to help carry the baskets, and guard them from too near an approach to the sea. The Sands were often thronged by gay groups of bathers, or persons lounging in morning strolls, before the fashionable hour arrived for visiting the libraries, when they were deserted by all but children and their attendants.

On one of those lovely mornings, when every thing in nature seemed rejoicing in life and light, the young Courtenays, Edith, and Jenny, were equipped for an excursion to the Sands, their baskets on their arms for marine treasures, animation in every movement, and glee in every heart, at the anticipations of what would be brought home.

They arrived on the beach, — found many shells, lovely seaweeds, &c. They continued to wander on, hardly looking up, so intent were they all upon the search for what Edith called “gems of the ocean,” when a sudden darkness called Jenny’s attention to the sky, which had become overcast almost to blackness over the sea. These startling changes in the weather are very common in England: they are often so sudden as to give the traveller but little warning to seek shelter. Large drops of rain soon fell, and other indications of a storm succeeded. Jenny turned abruptly towards the ocean, saw these fearful evidences of danger, and then, for the first time, noticed that the projections of cliffs over which they

must pass were submerged. "The tide! the tide!" she exclaimed in agony of terror; "the rocks are under water! What will become of us if we do not hurry on? O Miss Edith! do try to hasten the children, I beg of you! On! on! or we are lost!" Edith's agitation was extreme: she felt how careless both herself and Jenny had been, thus to wander on, regardless of time and distance. There seemed no help at hand. Seizing little Marion's wrist, she dragged her onwards as rapidly as her trembling limbs would allow. But the wind had risen to a gale; the spray almost blinded her; and she often bowed beneath the force of the storm. Still she grasped the child firmly, and tried to soothe her alarm by cheering words. There was so much at stake; the lives of the children, her own life, depended upon extraordinary effort; and she screamed aloud, "Help! help! For God's sake, help!"

The dark mass of waters came rushing in, dashing in wild fury against, and even over, their landmarks. Still her words spoke hopefully; still she urged her way, her feet wet with the waves, which every minute broke over them, and at intervals seemed ready to sweep the wretched little group out into the sea. Jenny shrieked for help; but both the voices were apparently lost in the lashing of the surge, the roaring of the wind.

The wild tumult for one moment was lulled, when, exerting themselves to their utmost strength, Jenny and Edith screamed again, "Help! children! help!"

Suddenly a loud voice was heard, which shouted, "Holloa! holloa!" and gazing from the cliff were two stout fellows, who, as the desolate children turned their eyes upwards, said, "Be of good cheer; we can help you up the cliffs; keep still; never fear; the worst is over."

They came rapidly down the sides, and, snatching the younger ones, soon landed them safely; then returned for Jenny and Edith, who stood shivering, covered with spray, and with so slippery a foothold as to be in danger of falling on the sands, or being swept off by the tide. The cliffs were fortunately neither very high nor very steep, and, although apparently inaccessible to young people, were easily scaled by stout men.

They placed the party in safety, above the roaring tide; and poor Jenny, as she surveyed the forlorn group, dripping with wet, burst into an agony of tears. Edith's black hair, drenched with salt water, hung in heavy masses over her shoulders, while her large dark eyes seemed distended by horror at what she had suffered both mentally and physically.

One of the men, after surveying the party very benevolently, and as if in pity of their condition, said to Jenny, "Young woman, don't stand crying there, but think of these children in wet clothes. Where do they belong? Wipe your eyes, and tell us where you live, and we'll get a conveyance to take you there."

At that moment, a carriage was seen driving furi-

ously towards the scene of trouble. Mr. Courtenay leaped from it, apparently in great consternation. He looked at the children almost in dismay, as he saw their drenched garments and pale faces; but, knowing the anxiety their mother was suffering, he allowed himself no time for the indulgence of feeling, but, hurrying them, with Jenny, into the carriage, bade the coachman hasten home with all rapidity. He had seen the storm approaching, and, finding the children had not returned, became excessively alarmed; ordered the carriage to hasten to the cliffs, in an agony of terror at what might await him on his arrival. When he found them all safe, the revulsion of feeling was so great as to require the utmost self-command; but it was not until they were driving homewards he exhibited any emotion. Caroline and Marion began eagerly to relate the adventure, begging Jenny might not be blamed.

“No one shall be blamed, my dears,” said Mr. Courtenay; “we will only be thankful to God for preserving you from the overwhelming tide. Never again run such a risk. You have miraculously escaped being drowned.”

The men, it appeared, had been at work in the grounds above the cliffs, and were just leaving, to wait until the storm passed over, when they thought they heard a cry of distress. They had noticed the little party some time before, but concluded they had left the Sands. As the wind lulled, they listened, and, feeling certain it was some one in danger, came to their

assistance. They were liberally rewarded for their adventurous aid, and the affair produced no disastrous results. It was a long time ere any walks to the Sands were allowed, and then only when Mr. Courtenay could go.

Edith's imagination, very vivid even in girlhood, always treasured the memory of this scene with peculiar tenacity. She very frequently reverted to, it. The roaring tide, the suddenly darkened sky, the screams of the sea-gull, the rushing wind, were clearly in her mind years afterwards ; and often, as she stood, in other lands, on a bold rocky coast, did she call up that fearful hour, when, in childish helplessness, she struggled on the stormy beach of Margate, with her adopted sisters, depending on God alone to guide some protecting hand by which they might be rescued from their perilous situation.*

In a week or two, Edward Courtenay joined his family for a brief vacation. He was about fifteen months older than Edith, who was very strongly attached to him. Never was a happier vacation : the young people were so desirous to make time pass pleasantly, they accompanied him in his walks ; often going some distance to a rural spot, where they dined in a grove of magnificent elms, danced

* The description of this scene on Margate Sands may bear some resemblance to the storm in the "Antiquary." It occurred before the "Antiquary" was written. The incidents are strictly *true*, though but imperfectly sketched. The party very narrowly escaped a frightful death, the author being one of the number.

on the green, and, decking themselves with flowers, laughed away the happy hours until time to return, which poor Jenny would unceasingly tell them must be an hour earlier than they wished : but she watched the clouds, and, if one appeared "no larger than a man's hand," she predicted a shower.

Sometimes Mr. Courtenay and their mother went off in a boat with them along the coast, guided by a skilful sailor as pilot. This was particularly delightful to Edward, who had always expressed a fondness for the sea. A row along the coast, — how exciting it was ! and how the silvery laugh would echo among the cliffs, as the children dashed the water in Edward's face, to give him, as they said, a *taste* of the sea.

A trip to Dover, to visit the Castle, finished the pleasure excursions ; for the summer was gone. All returned to Milton in the yacht which conveyed them to Margate ; but the charm of the wide sea was over. The memory of the scene on the Sands was too fresh, the escape from the stormy waves too sadly impressed, not to cast a gloom over the party as the little vessel bounded homewards under a stiff breeze.

Mrs. Harcourt and Margaret were well ; but the latter was a striking contrast, in her delicacy of appearance, to the sun-burnt, rosy-cheeked Courtenays, who all looked as if health and bloom had been inhaled in every breeze at Margate. They were delighted to meet each other ; and many were the

hours passed in relating the adventures of the last three months, until Margaret's imagination was also filled with the beauty and grandeur of the scenery. The shells and seaweeds were shared with her.

CHAPTER II

"The leaving of the university was the first time the two sisters had ever
 may wonder in the halls of memory, but the words of the poet are true
 upon the heart of childhood, and the time is past, and the world is new, and
 but the vivid pictures of after-days, and the memory of the first days
 of early life."

Now came the time for separating the two sisters, and
 so much dreaded was it that the girls seemed to
 lose their spirits in the prospect of leaving their
 Edith and Caroline. But it was a time when the
 town of Milton afforded for the education of the
 nation so appreciated in England, and the
 situation commanded nearly the best of the country
 thoroughly instructed. It was decided that the girls
 go to Mrs. Laurence's in London, where, by their
 recommendations that that of being near home,
 whose school was in that city.

Good Mrs. Laurence, who was not only a
 sending children from home, really proved a
 prospect of separation. The girls, however,
 pitied the two girls, and they happened to be
 strain across the great distance. And Mrs.
 Granville added her share in their discomfort by
 saying, "I am glad it is not for my grandchildren."

ma would never consent to sending *me* from home." The fire flashed from Edith's eyes as she haughtily said, —

"Cast no reflections on *our* mamma. Do you imagine either she or Mr. Courtenay would send *us* away but for our good? How are we to be properly educated in this small town? You will have to go away some day."

Edith felt Margaret's remark to the quick. She feared the slightest imputation on her mother's kindness, and knew full well how she suffered at the *thought* even of parting. But, in a moment, her better nature prevailed: she remembered Margaret was motherless as herself in reality, though equally blessed in friends; and, turning suddenly to her, she said, —

"Do forgive me, dear Margaret! Do not think of my rude manner; for I would not offend one so much younger than myself, any more than one of my own age."

Margaret readily extended her hand, and, as the tears filled her eyes, said, —

"Oh! I am not offended; but I was sorry to have you speak as you did, because you are so soon going away."

It was a lesson to Edith not soon forgotten. The words "going away" sounded in her ears long after the air had ceased to echo them; and she would afterwards say, mentally, "Are we not all going away from life, its pleasures, its praises, its pains, its

heart-burnings? Why imbitter the short period allotted us by any utterances we may regret when summoned where every idle word is to be accounted for?"

During the preparations for her departure, Edith passed two days at Glendale Farm.

Arthur had gone to Eton, and every thing seemed so changed. Matilda, too, had returned to school. Edith tried to laugh, as Mary Leslie called her on her serious face, when she found Arthur was not at home, telling her how much they had missed her after her spring visit; that her brother used to be very sentimental; would repeatedly say, "What a change since Edith left us! How I miss her light step tripping over the piazza, her wild birdlike singing as she stooped for flowers, and, above all, her saucy rebukes to me for not admiring Lord Oswald or Corinna!"

Edith could not forbear a smile at what Mary called Arthur's sentimentality; but she treasured it up, for she wanted to be associated in his mind with things so pleasant as flowers, birdlike singing, &c. She did not say how much she missed him; but she strolled into the walks and lanes they had trodden together, and loitered over a rose-bush, which had a single flower, the last of the season (for the gardens now were stripped of all summer beauties). She plucked the solitary rose, meaning to preserve it; but her romance fled before the melancholy fact that it fell to pieces, and the petals were scattered by the breeze.

“Jenny would call this an omen,” thought Edith; “but I do not. I merely think the rose had lived as long on the bush as it could; and when

‘I snapped it too rudely, alas!’
Why, ‘it fell to the ground.’”

The afternoon previous to leaving Glendale, she went with Mary to all their familiar haunts; stopped before the “hawthorn-bush beneath the shade,” its flowers long since departed; shook down the ripe chestnuts and the filberts; walked round the garden, called on the shepherd, and ascended the little hill, from which they could see the sun go down in almost cloudless beauty. Both were silent, until Edith said, dejectedly, “O Miss Leslie! that hateful boarding-school! How I dread it! and how often I shall come back in imagination to this place! What can make up to me its loss, and a separation for months from all I love but Caroline? — and she is too young to enter into my feelings.”

Mary cheered her by saying she would “write and tell her how all things went on; the price of hay, wheat, and barley; every thing concerning the spring broods, &c., the most interesting of details.”

“Will you tell me of Matilda?”

“Yes; and, what you would prefer, I will tell you of Arthur, — his progress at Eton.”

“Don’t you think Arthur very good, as well as very handsome?” said Edith, ingenuously.

“Yes,” said Mary; “he is a noble-minded, ex-

cellent fellow. There is no subject on which I so love to dwell as my brother. For one so young, he has remarkable characteristics : so strong a love of truth ; such independence ; dauntless and well-directed, too, never displayed haughtily, or, indeed, in any improper way, but the rule of his general conduct. He dares at eighteen to act and speak the truth like a man of twenty-five. I have heard papa say he never caused him an anxious hour. I believe, Edith, his excellence in conduct is wholly owing to a deep religious sense. He makes no parade of his feelings ; still they are very earnest, I know. But the sun has gone down, and we are still far from home : it is becoming very damp. We must hurry on, and leave Arthur's panegyric until a future day."

Edith placed her arm within her friend's, merely saying, "I wish we were not obliged to go home yet. Why could not the sun have waited for us?"

The next day, Edith returned to Milton. The weather had changed ; the clouded sky appeared as sad as her own feelings at parting with Mr. Leslie and Mary. As she stepped into the carriage which was to convey her home, some large raindrops fell. Mary smiled as she said, "The heavens weep your departure as I probably shall." The adieus were made, and once more Edith was travelling homewards.

CHAPTER X.

“Now in thy youth beseech of Him,
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That his light in thy heart become not dim,
And his love be unforgot;
And thy God, in the darkest of days, will be
Greenness and beauty and strength to thee.”

THERE was something exciting in the preparations for the children's departure. Caroline and Edith called on their mother's friends to say good-by; were loaded with presents as tokens of regard, and the kindest wishes, with promises exacted to visit all in the Christmas holidays. The dread of the school seemed to diminish; and they both began to hope the tales they had heard of tyranny, &c., might have been exaggerated. At length the day arrived. Grandmamma Harcourt was the last to be visited. She and Margaret were much grieved at losing their young friends; but were tolerably cheerful, at least externally.

The carriage drove to the door; the trunks were lashed on; the servants stood with their aprons at their eyes. Jenny sobbed aloud. Marion cried with the rest, as in duty bound. Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay

seated themselves, the children following, and straining their eyes from the carriage windows for one more look. The door was closed ; "smack went the whip, round went the wheels ;" and soon the turn in the street hid them from sight. The distance was but eighteen miles ; and, in what appeared a very short time, the old Cathedral of Rochester was seen. In a few minutes more, the carriage stopped before the massive entrance of "Elms-gate House," and all were soon in the presence of Mrs. Lanmeer. She received the party very graciously, — was dignified, ladylike, and affable.

Edith's countenance became pale ; her heart beat violently ; her feelings were indescribable.

After all the directions were given, the studies named, charges most earnestly reiterated concerning the health of the two pupils, Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay rose to depart. Caroline clung to her father, imploring him not to leave her. He turned to the window to conceal his emotions, the child still hanging on his arm. He pressed his head against the panes of glass ; and, as Edith approached him, the big tears fell on his cheeks. She spoke to him : "Dear Mr. Courtenay ! — papa !" Her lips had never before thus named him. The effort was a desperate one ; but the sight of his tears brought to her the thought of what her father would have suffered thus to part with her. From the fountain of her deep love welled up a gush of tenderness she tried not to check ; and, as he stooped to kiss her, she

clasped his neck, and said, "I will be kind to Caroline at all times. You are my own dear papa ; trust her to me." "Willingly, my dearest Edith," was the reply. "I have perfect confidence that you will be a watchful guardian over my child's happiness. I do not believe I could leave her, were you not with her." Mr. Courtenay pressed both the children in his arms, and left the room. Mrs. Courtenay stood in agonized struggles for composure. She clasped the girls again and again in her embrace, gave the fervent "Good-by ! God bless you both !" and was gone.

When the door closed, and the retreating wheels died in the distance, Edith wrung her hands in despair. Caroline threw herself on a sofa, and gave vent to her sorrow in a passionate burst of grief. Edith echoed every sob, until, fearing the child would be ill, she exerted herself to the utmost to comfort her. Mrs. Lanmeer sent for Edward, whose school was near ; and as he had seen his parents after they left East Gate, and brought messages of endearment, they became more calm towards the afternoon. They did not go into the schoolroom that evening until prayer-time, when Mrs. Lanmeer ushered them among nearly one hundred pupils ; mentioned their names ; requested some of the young ladies to be kind to them ; and, when prayers were over, they retired for the night.

The chamber contained several beds, with pretty white curtains, — every thing so neat, and in accord-

ance with perfect order. The girls knelt, as was the home-custom, at the side of their bed, and offered up their humble petition at the throne of grace ; but poor Caroline, when she came to the words "God bless dear papa and mamma !" burst into a fresh torrent of tears. Edith, who understood the cause of the renewed grief, hushed her to sleep in her arms.

The two young ladies who occupied the adjoining bed were disposed to be what, in an English boarding-school, are often called "quizzers." One of them commenced her refined mode of attack by asking Edith, "What is your papa's business, or profession, Miss Dacres ?"

"Papa *was* an officer in the army. He died of wounds in Canada during the late war in America. Caroline Courtenay's parent is an American merchant," — and her high spirit kindled as she continued, — "called, in his country, princes."

"Oh !" said Miss Gunning, I presume you will despise me, then ; for my father is a mechanic." (This was a falsehood.)

"Not at all," Edith said, in a very independent manner ; "I have been taught not to regard the occupation, but the *man*. I don't believe, when you know more of me, you will think me so unjust."

"You are a brave girl, at any rate," replied the other ; "and I will never try to tease you again." And, springing from her bed, kissed the sad stranger, and good-naturedly bade her good night."

Though Edith was not fourteen, she was armed with principles so firmly fixed as to repel all attacks. Her heart beat warmly beneath the ægis ; but it beat steadily and unflinchingly at the call of duty. She had very little sleep that night, and arose in the morning forlorn and dejected : no bright smile cheered her, no fond salutation greeted her.

After breakfast, the pupils had an hour for recreation in the playground, where all manner of sports were practised, — ball, skipping the rope, battledoor, &c. The scholars seemed perfectly free, and enjoyment was the order of the hour. The two strangers looked on for some time, no one seeming to care that they were strangers, when a lovely looking girl, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, advanced, and asked them to join in the sports. Taking a hand of each, she led them to a group who were playing “drop the handkerchief.” From that sort of sympathy which so strongly connects the young, they soon became quite interested, and played cheerfully until the bell was rung for the school to commence.

Edith and Caroline were placed under the particular care of one of the teachers, a Miss Weldon, who was to have the supervision of their studies and their wardrobe.

Elms-gate House was a large stone building, which had once been a convent ; and, connected with it, many a sad tradition even at that time existed, — of punishments inflicted on the nuns, their being immured in a dungeon, &c. The truth of these tales

the older scholars doubted : they probably originated in the brain of former occupants. At any rate, Edith thought it a bright, cheerful building, fronting a beautiful garden, the façade covered with luxuriant growth of ivy, eglantine, and honeysuckle, which, when the casements were opened, burst into the schoolroom, and spread their branches over the recesses of the bay windows. The first were passing away, as it was early autumn ; but the honeysuckle still bloomed, and the eglantine leaves emitted their delicious odor.

The garden was yet gay with the marigold, chrysanthemum, wallflower, and laurustinus, many of them in perfection, as the moisture of the climate tends to preserve flowers until very late in the autumn.

The ivy trained its dark-green foliage on the walls, which, even when winter approached, wore an air of springlike beauty.

The interior of the house might be called very pleasant ; for the bright faces of many of the scholars diffused an air of cheerfulness over all things.

To Edith, there was as yet but little cause for happiness. She acknowledged the importance of being at school ; but she pined for the society of Mr. Courtenay and her mother, the domestic comforts of her home ; and, under that saddest of all feelings, homesickness, she became so dejected, and looked so pale, that Mrs. Lanmeer told her she must send word to her friends how unhappy she was, and request them to send for her. This, she knew, would never an-

swer : it would disappoint them sadly. And, rousing herself to action, she pursued her studies with great energy, was diligent at her drawing and music ; and, fired by the laudable ambition of showing at Christmas how much she had improved, she found the best remedy for home-sickness was constant employment, sought companionship with pupils older than herself, and in a few weeks was contented. The young lady, Eliza Sedley, who had so kindly noticed her the morning after her arrival, became her warm friend, her guide and counsellor ; and the bond of affection thus formed was but more closely cemented by time.

Little Caroline was happy as a lark ; the gayety of her disposition made her a general favorite ; and, either as pet or playfellow, she was sought by all the younger pupils.

CHAPTER XI.

"The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep,
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have passed away
I might have watched through long decay." — BYRON.

ONE morning after school, as Edith was looking for something at the bottom of her trunk, she discovered a pocket-book, which she did not remember ever to have seen before. She opened it, and found a note from Mrs. Courtenay, saying it contained some letters which she knew Edith would value, as written by her father soon after the death of her mother. These letters she had saved until she thought her old enough to value their depth of feeling, their profound religious sense. Edith was alone, and, on opening the first letter, was indeed affected by its mournful style: —

"MY DEAR COURTENAY, — There is such a luxury in talking or writing to one who I know feels for me as you do, that I hasten to reply to your letter of the 27th, received yesterday.

"None but those who have loved like me, and who have had their happiness blighted by the breath of misfortune, can know how mournfully sweet it is to talk of, and weep for, the object of our departed joys. There is a luxury in it far above the comprehension of ordinary minds, too refined for any but dear friends to share. What is the world, with all its enticements, to me? She who gave to life all its charms lives herself no longer on the earth! She who was my friend, my counsellor, the partner of my joys and sorrows, she who pointed the way to happiness, and cheered me on my road of life, now sleeps the sleep of death!

"Can it be wrong for me to mourn for her? Can I be blamed for shedding the tear of bitter regret, when I think of my poor motherless child, left so early without that tender guardian who would so joyfully have watched and directed her expanding mind?

"I may perhaps be charged, by the cold and heartless, with carrying my regrets to a culpable excess; but I am sure *you*, at least, will not blame me. You knew my wife, and can estimate the weight of my loss; and did not the Saviour weep at the grave of his friend Lazarus? Ought I to be blamed for doing that which was done by one who furnished the highest example the universe ever beheld of faith, patience, and reigination to the divine will? Pity me, then, my friend, but do not condemn me. I shall, in time, be able to bear up in a more manly way. My child, my friends, have claims on me which ought not to be disregarded. Faith, too, encourages me with the hope I shall one day rejoin my beloved wife in the mansions of the blessed, and that she is only gone before me, inasmuch as she was worthy *first* to be partaker of heavenly joys, that she might teach me how to bear, with Christian resignation, the ills of life, and how, when called upon by our Father, to relinquish, without a murmur, all the flattering prospects of this world, even life itself, and to depart full of joy and peace in triumphant faith."

There were several other letters, written in the same style, over which Edith's tears flowed copiously.

A small package was also in the pocket-book, in which she found a lock of dark hair, and a plain gold ring. The words, "My dear wife's hair, and her wedding-ring, destined for my little Edith," gave a sacredness to them which made their value inestimable. She placed the ring on her finger, determining never to remove it, unless it should become, in after-years, the symbol of her own plighted faith. She closed the book with a fervent kiss, went to her school duties, fortified, she thought, to bear all firmly that might await her.

There are trials in an English boarding-school hard to be borne, because they come upon young and undisciplined minds; there are pleasures also, which even the young can appreciate. Among the latter were the delightful walks in which the pupils of Elms-gate House were indulged. They often strayed, accompanied by the teachers, through groves and fields rich with autumn flowers, — the asters, golden-rod, &c.; or strolled on the fertile banks of the Medway, whose silvery stream wandered through lovely regions, and near which were beautiful villas belonging to the rich men of Kent. At other times, the walks would be through woody lanes, where the woodbine still bloomed with the autumn harebell; where, from a little spring which often ran bubbling under a hedge, the girls would delightedly take up the water in their hands, and revel in its coolness. But the great pleasure was to go into the wheat-fields, help the gleaners' by gathering up all the

fallen ears, and assist in filling their bundles, which they carried home on their heads, —

“The weight on the head, gay joy in the heart.”

Had the internal discipline been of a gentler nature, Edith and Caroline might have been happy ; but the rules, which were read every Monday morning, were very rigid, and, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, altered not, unless the circumstances were of an unusual character which demanded indulgence. The constant restraint was hard to endure ; and there seemed a strange inconsistency in the out-of-doors enjoyment and the stern discipline within.

One incident will be sufficient illustration of the severity with which an offence was followed. The pupils attended divine service at Rochester Cathedral, and of course were expected (and very properly) to give their whole attention to the solemn liturgy.

One Sunday, when the bishop was in the most impressive part of the morning prayers, a woman rushed up the aisle, and, standing before the reading-desk, courtesied in mock reverence, saying, in loud tones, “How do you do, Mr. Minister?” She was immediately removed from the church ; but of course this scene made a sensation through the assembly, particularly in the gallery where the East-gate scholars sat. Some tittered ; others, covering their faces, moved nervously in their seats ; but poor Caroline Courtenay was unable to control her merriment, and laughed outright.

Edith was thunderstruck. She turned towards the teachers, read consternation in their faces, and well foreboded what the culprit would have to encounter. She became painfully uneasy. To laugh in a church was certainly an offence, and merited reproof; to laugh in a cathedral, in the presence of a right reverend bishop, was an act of terrible irreverence.

Not a word was said when the pupils went home, nor was any allusion made to the scene. Edith hoped the affair would pass off, as an act of childish thoughtlessness. But not so: the storm was gathering, to break on the head of the young offender.

Immediately after breakfast, on Monday morning, the head teacher called Caroline into the middle of the schoolroom, saying, —

“Miss Caroline Courtenay, are you aware that you did a very wicked thing yesterday when you laughed aloud in church? Do you know such an act is called irreverent behavior?”

The poor child turned ghastly pale at these inquiries, shook in every limb with alarm, cast an imploring look on Edith as for protection, and said, in a broken voice, to the teacher, “I could not help it: I am so sorry I did it!”

The gentle tones of her voice, half choked by fear, the genuine contrition in her pale face, told how deeply she felt. They availed her not. The teacher said, “Your punishment is to wear a badge of disgrace on your forehead all day, inscribed with the

words, 'Irreverent behavior.' Come forward to me. You are also to stand, through the hours of school, in the middle of the room; your food to be bread and water, which you are to eat alone at a side-table. You may sit during the play-hours, — at no other time."

The sentence was no sooner pronounced than Edith darted from her seat; and, clasping one arm round the poor culprit, she laid the other across her brow, as if to shield her from the impending disgrace. "Hush, Carrie dear!" she whispered. "I remember my promise to your papa: I will protect you." She turned a look of haughty defiance on all around, her dark eyes flashing unearthly light. Her comb having fallen, her black curls floated over her beautifully formed throat and shoulders, giving her the air of a young Pythia.

The governess was sent for, Edith charged with rebellion. She was publicly reproved; but a low murmur ran through the school, as if in approval of her conduct. But the powers were too strong for a girl to contend with: she was sternly ordered to her seat, but not until she had given utterance to a brief speech: "That child's noble father, her high-minded mother, — how would they feel to know what is going on here! The whole world would say her punishment is too severe." "Silence!" sounded from Mrs. Lanmeer, "silence! or you shall be dismissed from the school." The badge was bound on the child's forehead: her passive submission was

indeed a contrast to Edith's wild outbreak, and would have moved to pity any other than tyrants. She stood with her head bowed, the light from her clear eyes almost extinguished by the large drops which filled them.

The meals for that day were untouched by Edith ; her power of swallowing was gone. This child, confided to her care, sent to school as much perhaps to be her companion as to learn, was disgraced in the presence of the whole school. She was made ill and miserable. She knew the scholars sympathized with her, exulted in her daring to speak ; she could read it in their kind looks.

The young martyr bore her punishment quietly and meekly through the day : but nature had been tried to its utmost ; and, when the bell rang for prayers, and the badge was removed, she fell in a swoon at the teacher's feet.

"She is dead!" shrieked Edith. The murmur through the schoolroom was like the sound of distant waves : all were shocked beyond the power of control. Edith caught the child in her arms, bore her to a seat. The scholars ran for water, which was sprinkled over her face and rubbed on her hands ; and, in a few minutes, animation returned. She opened her eyes, and said, "Where is sister?"

"I am here, dearest : are you better?"

"Oh, yes! thank you ; but is the badge off?"

"Think no more of *that*, Carrie ; the day is over."

The pupils crowded round her, kissed her hands and pale cheeks: though they dared not utter words of condolence, they evinced, by every means they could exhibit, how deeply incensed they were by the day's proceedings.

What passed among the governess and teachers never transpired. No punishment was inflicted on Edith; her "rebellion" was overlooked: but, from that hour, her position in the school was one that few girls of her age ever attain; for there was in her words and actions a power which all around her clearly saw and tacitly acknowledged.

CHAPTER XII.

"Do you remember all the sunny places,
Where, in bright days long past, we played together?
Do you remember all the dear home faces
That gathered round the hearth in wintry weather?
Do you remember all the happy meetings,
Kind looks, kind hearts, kind words, and tender greetings?
Do you remember them?"

PEACE between England and the United States had been established for some time; but a little of the *war-spirit* yet remained, and even spread itself into schools. It was frequently amusing to hear children echoing the sentiments of their parents, and disputing about conquest and defeat.

On one occasion, Caroline came running to Edith, looking very angry, with the entreaty, "Do come and talk to these girls: they are calling papa a Yankee, and telling stories about his country."

"Well, well," said Edith, "I will fight your battles, Carrie. What is the matter, young ladies?"

"Oh! Caroline is so cross, because we say the English marched to Washington, set fire to the Capitol, the President's house too. She says it is not

true ; she denies also that the Yankees were beaten in Canada."

Edith looked at the young politicians with a smile ; then said, very calmly, " I am as truly English as any of you ; I love my country equally well, but not at the expense of justice. The war on the land was, in many cases, disastrous to the Americans ; but did you never hear of such names as Hull, Decatur, Bainbridge, Blakely, Perry, Stewart, and Lawrence, — any or all of them ? When you boast, you should tell the whole story, girls, and do justice to the Yankees, as you call them, — a nation of brave men."

" Pray, where did you learn so much about this war, and the officers engaged in it ? " inquired a pert girl.

" From my adopted father, Mr. Courtenay, who is an American, who has related all the events to me, and whose feelings suffered much during the disputes between the two countries. From him I learned all I know : he also taught me to be just to both nations. My advice to you is to be so too ; for *both* deserve your respect."

The political discussions were not resumed after this explanation. The disputants easily saw that Edith did not speak ignorantly ; and the memory of her father, her gallant father, came vividly before her, lending animation to her manner, and giving eloquence to her speech.

The Christmas holidays now approached. Trials

were endured with comparative cheerfulness ; for a bright future was before all at East Gate, — a re-union with friends, a restoration to home comforts. Lessons were less strictly marked ; games were allowed in the evenings, when the studies for the next day were finished ; pleasures, freedom, were increased. But the system of an English boarding-school, at that period, was wrong in the abstract, unsound in principle, and of course erroneous in practice. Teachers ought to stand in the place of parents ; the voice of admonition ought to be gentle, the heart taught to love duty ; no pupil should shrink from the eye of the instructor ; all ought to be confidence, trust, and harmony, where religion should be the great basis of good conduct. To win the affections should be the grand stimulus in teaching. Let the pupil only *love* the teacher, and learning is a pleasure ; to do rightly, an easy task : for what young person can act ingenuously, when an eye of scrutiny is ever upon him or her ? Is not such continual watchfulness one cause of frequent deception ?

Several letters had passed between Mary Leslie and Edith. The simplicity and openness of the latter were checked by the fact, that every communication was read by a teacher. She dared not even send a message to Arthur ; but she was glad to hear of his progress at Eton, his preparation for Cambridge, and determined, when she met him, she would tell him how she had longed to see him, dear Glendale, and all its loved friends. How stiff her letters seemed !

so painfully correct, so heartlessly neat, she hated almost to send them.

The day at length arrived for going home. There were some sad partings with young ladies who had finished their school education, and would not return ; there were tears, kisses, smiles, and cordial shaking of hands.

Caroline jumped into the carriage ; Edith said her last words : they called for Edward, and were soon whirling homewards.

Such joy when they saw Milton Church, the old structure so dear ; it was only half a mile from home ! Such sparkling eyes, flushed cheeks, and clapping of hands, when *home* was in sight ! The carriage stopped : then came the wild outbreak of joy, such as an English schoolgirl alone knows ; the greeting with parents, little Marion, Jenny and the other domestics ; and then a run for the garden, despoiled as it was of all but its evergreens, yet still a place of enchantment ; for there stood the summer-house, the almond-tree, and remains of late flowers, which often linger until Christmas. Tilbury Fort, too, looked so regally, with its proud towers and waving flags ! Every familiar object seemed to have acquired a value never before possessed ; a value not its own, but produced by association.

Grandmamma Harcourt and Margaret were among the first visitors to greet the two girls, and, on Twelfth Night, gave them a party, such as English children always enjoy so highly. The choosing of

king and queen causes so much emotion ; the cutting the plum-cake, crowning the queen, &c., all so exciting. Arthur Leslie was one of the company on this occasion ; was elected king, and Margaret Granville his royal consort. He performed the ceremony of crowning her very gracefully, and, to Edith, never appeared so well. There was a union of dignity, and condescension of manner, which led him to accommodate himself to those who were so much younger. He did it in a way emphatically his own : he placed the wreath on the queen's head with the gallantry of a knight of old ; and as she sat on a raised seat, surrounded by her subjects, the scene was quite an interesting one. Though Arthur was *king* of the evening's entertainment, there was a *subject* not overlooked. Edith was still the preferred one ; and he contrived, just before the leave-taking, to place in her dark hair a lovely white flower. Had not the bustle of preparation for departure occupied the attention of the young people, a blush might have betrayed Edith's pleasure at this bestowment.

Every thing had been done for the happiness of the two girls by their parents and friends. But festivities must cease. Christmas departed, and with it the holidays. "The best friends must part ; education before pleasure, Miss Edith," was Jenny's sagacious remark, as she packed the trunks once more. Edith and Caroline returned to Rochester rather heavy-hearted, as there was a prospect of Mr. Courtenay being obliged to go to the United States on business ;

but the school discipline was not so much dreaded as formerly. They expected to meet many of their young friends; were ambitious of advancement in their classes; and, above all, Edith's sense of integrity rejoiced to remember that no temptation had lured her into a relation of tyranny exercised over either. The affair of the church had not been named; and she could unblushingly look teachers and pupils in the face, knowing her former griefs were locked in her own heart: not a tale had been told.

Many of the pupils had returned; the teachers were at their posts; and the school commenced with its course of thorough instruction.

Edith's first lesson given by the governess was to commit Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" to memory. Three months were allowed, this being an exercise in addition to all others.

She was delighted at the selection, as it was her favorite poem, and the study of it would be real enjoyment. So much of it was so like Glendale, and so associated with the Leslies, she seemed to revel in the sweet scenes so beautifully portrayed. With what sympathetic tenderness she paused on the passages descriptive of the removal of the villagers! —

"Good Heaven! what sorrow gloomed that parting day
Which called them from their native walks away,
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round their bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the Western main!"

Though hardly old enough to fully appreciate the treasures of Goldsmith's mind, Edith's love of country scenes was strengthened by every line. She repeated the poem at the time appointed, with the beautiful and varied intonation necessary for the full effect, and received all the commendation she desired. But there still were trials. The rules of the school required great neatness and order in every pupil, punishment and mortification often following acts of carelessness. One morning, Edith missed her French Dictionary, and, learning from one of the scholars it was in the "culprit's basket," was in hourly expectation of her sentence.

In a few evenings there was to be what was called a "public," when the young ladies danced before the parents. Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay were to be present on this occasion. It would be just before Mr. Courtenay sailed.

This dictionary was an incubus to poor Edith; it oppressed her by night and day. Miss Sedley, with great tenderness, urged her to keep perfectly quiet. Perhaps it would never be noticed; it might be a mistake, it having been seen. She hoped for the best: but on the day before the "public," while preparing for dinner, she was summoned to the school-room, as the messenger said, "to receive her doom; for the fatal basket was before Miss A."

"I shall die with shame," Edith exclaimed, "if I am to be mortified to-morrow evening in the pre-

sence of so many people ! and my dear mamma and Mr. Courtenay too ! ”

“ Keep up your courage,” said one of the girls. “ What disgrace is there in forgetting to put a book in its place ? ”

“ This tyranny is insupportable,” said another.

Edith obeyed the summons, — entered the school-room with a pale cheek, but very determined spirit. She called all her strength of mind to her aid as she said, “ Did you send for me, madam ? ”

“ I did,” replied Miss A. “ This is your book : what is the usual punishment for carelessness ? ”

“ Not such as I hope you would inflict on a young lady of my age, — to suspend a book round her neck ! It would be more, madam, than I think I *deserve* ; though I am very ready to own I ought to have been more careful. For my mamma’s sake, I ask forgiveness, not for my own.”

Whether Miss A. was struck by Edith’s ingenuous confession, or her independence, was not known ; but she was forgiven, as were all the other offenders, one of whom remarked, “ It must be the fearlessness and candor of Edith Dacres which have softened the heart of our Brutus. She has accomplished more than any other pupil : even the laws, once called Persian and Median, yield to her.”

Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay were at the “ public,” which came off with great *éclat*. Mr. Courtenay took leave of the two girls with much emotion. He

tried to cheer them by hopes of a re-union in the summer, little dreaming they were not to meet for a long, long time.

Eliza Sedley continued her affectionate attentions to Edith in every way, assisted her when perplexed in her lessons, exhorted her to perseverance, and stimulated her efforts, not for the applause of those around her, but the approbation of her own heart and conscience. Admonitions from this friend, so mildly given, sank deep into her memory. The gentle, silver-toned voice, which had music in every sound; the bright-blue eye, which never beamed on her but in kindness, — would have found Edith ungrateful indeed, had not the remembrance of Eliza's valuable qualities proved a wellspring in her soul, from which, as from a fountain of living water, issued many a lofty purpose, many a noble action.

CHAPTER XIII.

"We do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy."

ONE morning, when the roll was called, a voice from near Miss Sedley's vacant seat uttered the word "absent." Edith started in alarm. Her place was indeed vacated. Mysterious whispers were among the scholars, strange looks, hushed inquiries. She asked what was the matter. "Where is Eliza?" A reply from Miss Gunning was, "You will probably see her soon. She will be altered, — probably very sad; but wait until her return. Ask no further questions, if you love her. It would be painful to her to know you were uneasy; and no one can give you any information." Of course, nothing more was said. In a few days, Eliza returned, altered indeed, — so pale and dejected as if a deep sorrow had fallen upon her. She spoke kindly as ever to Edith, but made no allusion to her recent absence or its cause.

Several days passed, when, one morning in the playground, she approached her young friend, and, taking her arm within hers, said, "Edith, I have noticed your strict regard to my wishes, — your forbearance as it respects my sorrow. Deep indeed is the affliction in which I am involved. I have lost my only brother: he has fallen by his own hand!"

Edith looked timidly in her friend's face. She could not speak; for sympathy with the afflicted girl choked her utterance. Miss Sedley then went on to say, this brother, of whom her father had always been extravagantly fond, had been a wayward boy, though possessing some very fine qualities. He was in the army; had lately been quartered in a country town, where he had privately married a girl of great personal attractions, but infinitely his inferior in birth. But poorly educated, and in no way suitable for his wife, his father — a man of violent passions, whose pride was wounded, his hopes blighted, by this misalliance — had rashly said he never would forgive him.

The young soldier had obtained leave of absence for a short time, and, it was presumed, intended to visit his sister, to solicit her intercession with his father. He had arrived with his wife in Rochester. Eliza saw them in the evening, and promised to use all her persuasive powers to reconcile their father; though, knowing his inexorable temper, she felt but faint hopes of success. The next morning, a

knock was heard at Lieut. Sedley's door. He asked, "Who is there?"

A voice replied, "I want your boots, sir."

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "it is my father!" He sprang from his bed, seized a travelling pistol which was on the mantel-piece, and in a moment shot himself through the heart. The door was forced open; and there lay the young wife senseless on the floor, her husband dead by her side! The scene was not to be described; the agony of the father, the anguish of the wife when her senses were restored, can only be imagined.

It appeared that the elder Mr. Sedley had discovered his son's absence from his quarters, and, presuming he would visit his sister, had therefore started for Rochester, where he learned his arrival at the hotel. Determined upon seeing him unexpectedly, he had practised the deception of pretending to be a servant, and brought on this catastrophe.

Eliza said, when she had thus far proceeded in her narrative, "I am, you may easily see, very painfully situated. My father has always been affectionate to me, and I have yielded to him my respect and duty: but I cannot approve his deception; nor dare I palliate my brother's offence, in rushing so impetuously into the presence of his God, so selfishly leaving a young wife — hardly eighteen — unprotected, and almost alone. He violated his duty to his father by his imprudent marriage; and yet how well I loved

him, headstrong as he was ! I should not have related this sad story to you, Edith ; but I have noticed you are very mature for your years, thoughtful and sympathizing. I know, also, you would hear exaggerated statements from those who have no mercy for the erring ; and the affair has become public. My brother is buried : his wife has returned to her friends, some one of whom came for her immediately upon the news reaching her former home. My father has gone to Scotland for some time. I shall remain here during his absence.

Edith's warm-hearted nature sympathized in the affliction of her friend : she was more than ever devoted to her, and the friendship commenced at school never ceased. It was her greatest pleasure to be guided by Miss Sedley, — to seek companionship with her in their walks, in the playground, or wherever she had the power to be with her. There seemed to be a hallowed tone over this intercourse, rather unusual in two beings so young and so very unlike. But Eliza's mildness often restrained the impetuosity of Edith ; and, when the former at times saw the flash from the eyes of her friend when another had been wronged, she would playfully place her hand over her face, and say, " Your dark hair and bright eyes look very much like a thunder-storm. I wish, Edith, you would practise the mental discipline of which I know you capable, and try to check this impetuosity. The time may come to you, as it has to me, when you will be obliged to forbear, even

when you see another injured. Would not a gentler manner be quite as likely to aid the cause ? ”

“ How I wish I were more like you, dear Eliza ! But the power is still mine to benefit by your example, and it shall not be lost on me. There is much work to be done, but, I hope, nothing beyond my capability to accomplish.”

CHAPTER XIV.

"Time cannot heal our hopelessness, nor gather
The fragments of the vase in which were placed
The treasures of our hearts, but which, defaced,
Is dashed to earth and broken. No, no: rather
Time deepens all the lines which sorrow traced.
Is there no refuge, then? Yes, soul abased!
Pray thee in humbleness to thy great Father."

THE spring had arrived, with its flowers and verdure; again the violets bloomed, the primroses, the cowslips; the walks in the country were resumed, which seemed to shed such happiness over the scholars at Elms Gate. There were many lovely spots near Rochester easily reached, some very picturesque, with pretty footpaths to neat cottages; then an old hall, with its vine-clad walls, and gateway covered with ivy; the little woods near; an old orchard, &c., — scenery which realizes all the dreams of romance, and which the young enjoy so enthusiastically.

The wild laburnum and hawthorn hedges were in bloom: in fact, the surrounding country was a paradise. The pupils this season were allowed to roam — within sight of the teachers — through leafy glades, about the fields, or on the margin of the

river, generally having a rendezvous at no great distance, where they assembled to place themselves in their ranks.

The details of school-days may now begin to weary the reader ; and it may be well to draw them to a close, or rather to relate only such incidents as may have some slight claim to interest.

Among the pupils was a bright, blooming girl of seventeen, full of life, animation, and good humor, — a general favorite, even with her wild, daring, and often defiant opposition to the rules of the school. She appeared at times as if utterly reckless of the advice or guidance of the teachers. She had been threatened with expulsion, as wholly unmanageable, when her better nature would prevail, and for weeks she would be gentle, docile, and obedient as possible, — “winning, bewitching, reigning o’er all hearts, a fairy queen,” — until some temptation to rebel offered, and she would again bring herself into disgrace. So warm-hearted was Fanny Gordon, so affectionate, and prompt to oblige, that the scholars usually took her part. The younger girls always sought her in difficult lessons, puzzling sums, or when contriving a way to evade an expected punishment ; for, with characteristic disinterestedness, she would at any time hazard herself to screen another. For some days, Fanny had appeared very thoughtful : her cheerfulness had almost forsaken her. She had lately returned from a brief visit at the house of one of her relatives ; and, as her mother was a great in-

valid, it was presumed she was anxious about her, as she was probably more ill. When any one inquired why she was so serious, she treated the question lightly, and tried to conceal her disquietude.

Things were in this state, when, one evening, a rustling sound was heard in the recess, where Fanny was kneeling in prayer-time, and into which a casement opened. When the evening service was over, one of the teachers, directing her eyes to Fanny, inquired its cause. She hastily replied, "It was some of the wild roses, which caught in my frock." This answer was not satisfactory. She was called before Mrs. Lanmeer, when a letter was found in her corsage, tied to a silken cord. The contents, of course, were never made public; but the scholars, with a mysterious air, whispered, "It must have been from a gentleman!" — a dreadful offence. It was afterwards ascertained she had carried on a correspondence in this way.

Fanny never had an opportunity to offer any petitions heavenward, or draw any missives from the earth, in that recess again. Not even to her most intimate friends in the school did she ever lisp a syllable connected with this disgraceful affair; for doubtless it was one, as the result will show. A fortnight had elapsed, and the memory of the letter was passing away. Very little had been said about it, and the business of the school had gone on as usual, when one morning, when the roll was called, Fanny Gordon was missing. The young lady who shared

her bed said "she had arisen very early to study a difficult lesson, and gone into the schoolroom for that purpose." The rooms were all searched, the grounds, summer-house, &c. ; but she was nowhere to be found. No doubt existed of her having eloped. The consternation was general, all were so shocked and alarmed ; for it is simple justice to say, the morals of the pupils were as carefully guarded as if the teachers had had the Palladium in the sanctuary of the house. No deviation from the most refined delicacy was ever overlooked ; and such a violation of female propriety as *this* was overwhelming to all who held offices of guardianship in the establishment. The mystery was, how had she effected her escape, when there seemed to be eyes all over the house ? It was supposed one of the chambermaids aided her.

Fanny's father was immediately summoned. What passed in the interview with him and Mrs. Lanmeer remained a profound secret. Her clothes, books, &c., were sent away ; her seat occupied by another. Her radiant face was never seen again within those walls, her name never heard ; to mention it was considered an offence. But she was not forgotten : her active kindness, unfailing good-humor, and self-sacrificing nature, had endeared her to the larger part of her companions, who would often in silence exhibit to each other the little presents she had made them ; and, if they dared not *speak* her name, they cherished her memory with deep regret for her mis-

conduct. Probably, had her wayward disposition been earlier trained by religious instruction, had her mind been disciplined to obedience at *home*, she might have proved an ornament to society ; for she possessed the elements of a noble character. She had never been taught, until her residence at Elms Gate, to exercise any judgment, control any impulse, or check any wish. She had been the spoiled child of rich parents.

A veil was now to be thrown over all her brightness, — her very name considered a reproach. Poor Fanny !

CHAPTER XV.

"Farewell! but, whenever you welcome the hour
Which awakens the night-song of mirth in your bower,
Oh, think of the friend who once welcomed it too,
And forgot his own griefs to be happy with you!
His griefs may return; not a hope may remain
Of the few that have brightened his pathway of pain:
But he ne'er shall forget the sweet vision that threw
Its enchantment around him while lingering with you."

AFTER the event which concluded the last chapter, and as the autumn was approaching, Eliza Sedley was to leave school. Edith felt as if her happiness was to depart with her. Their attachment had been strengthened by time; no inharmonious word had ever passed between them; but a spirit so beautiful had pervaded their intercourse, that the girls often called them Hermia and Helena, with "two seeming bodies and one heart." Edith felt she should be almost alone; for so entirely had her affection been given to Eliza, she had cultivated but slight intercourse with the other scholars beyond what courtesy demanded.

Miss Sedley's health, since the melancholy death of her brother, had been very delicate; her smile

was seldom seen ; and her large, dovelike eyes often drooped with the tears which so frequently weighed their lashes. Her beauty had not diminished, but had assumed a more ethereal appearance. Having exerted herself fruitlessly to the utmost to ward off the sorrow which oppressed her, her friends had advised a change of climate. She was going to the south of France for the three winter months ; and, when the two friends parted, many of the scholars predicted they would never meet again.

Eliza's absence made a void in the school not to be filled while Edith remained. Her devoted and uniform attentions, her gentle admonitions, were those of an affectionate sister ; and Edith had often trembled with apprehension that serenity and happiness so undisturbed as their intercourse bestowed could not continue. Her friend was indeed gone ; but her own departure was nearer than she had anticipated. She had been two years at Mrs. Lanmeer's school, and might be called a thoroughly educated and accomplished girl ; sound in principle, unflinching in integrity, but at times a little too self-reliant. She knew her capabilities ; but, it must be said, she occasionally over-estimated them, and thought herself possessed of more power than she had.

She was much surprised, late one afternoon, by being summoned to the parlor, where Mrs. Lanmeer, with very little preparation, announced that Caroline and herself were to leave school at the end of the term, not to return.

“Not to return?” she said. “I presumed I was to stay here until my school education was completed. What is the reason? Is any thing the matter in Mr. Courtenay’s family?”

Mrs. Lanmeer then told her she had just received a letter from Mrs. Courtenay, saying her husband had met with heavy losses at sea, and in a cotton speculation, by which his property was so much reduced, he must remove his daughter from so expensive an establishment as East Gate.

“And *my* small fortune?” Edith paused, not daring to make further inquiry.

“I am sorry to say your property is also involved; not by Mr. Courtenay; but the agent to whom it was confided embarked a part of it in the same speculation, which will ruin hundreds of other people.”

Edith burst into tears; not for her own loss, but for the distress of her mother.

“Why did not mamma write to me?” she asked.

“She was unfit for the task, but probably will be able to do so in a few days. I beg of you to try and preserve your composure, Miss Dacres; brace your mind to bear this reverse with patient submission. To know you were distressed would add to Mrs. Courtenay’s already heavily laden heart. This was wholly unexpected to her; but, from her letter to me, I should judge she bore up heroically. You must endeavor to do the same. I would not speak of it to Caroline: she is hardly old enough to realize

any thing connected with mercantile affairs, and it would be difficult to explain the alteration in her father's circumstances."

When Edith returned to the schoolroom, how changed every thing appeared! Her eyes were filled with tears. There are some things for which all the preparations we fancy we have made fade before the reality. The loss of property may be placed among them; and, for a young girl reared in the lap of affluence, some strength of mind is needed to bear with calmness a sudden transition to comparative poverty. Her expectations seemed sorrowfully blighted; a cloud hung over her future life, darkening its brightness. She was to see her more than mother struggling with adversity: this was to her a greater sorrow than her own losses. Slowly and pensively she took her accustomed seat, hardly venturing to look at Caroline, lest her countenance should betray the sad tale of their mutual misfortunes. At that moment, one of the last beams of the setting sun darted through the casements, and shed its light on many a fair girl. Common as a sunbeam is, and often as it is overlooked, this ray of light went directly to the heart of Edith. She in one moment remembered how many blessings were yet left her; and the sudden blaze of glory seemed to promise brightness, and to be symbolical of days of happiness. She wondered why she should have allowed herself to be thus affected by Mrs. Lanmeer's information; and, summoning all her cheerfulness

to her aid, the evening was passed without mentioning a word to one of her companions, sure as she was of their sympathy. On her bed that night, Edith resolved, if it were possible, to bear submissively the changes of fortune ; to strive, by every means, to keep from her mother the sorrowful feeling by which she had been oppressed ; and to exert every effort to improve in her studies during the short time which yet remained to her at school.

In a few days, a letter came from her mother, written in a spirit of cheerful submission, which, if possible, added to Edith's love for this estimable woman. She wrote her, adversity always strengthened ties of affection where the heart was properly disciplined. "At any rate," continued she, "I seem to love my children more dearly than ever. Your home, Edith, must always be with us, until I consign you to a still nearer protector : we will share together what is left of our fortunes, and mutually comfort each other. My husband suffers so much in the disappointment of his hopes, his letters are so desponding, that I feel called upon to make additional efforts for his dear sake."

Edith applied herself more diligently than ever, and exhorted Caroline to industry and perseverance in her studies, suggesting to her that they might soon be called home. Mrs. Courtenay's next letter announced her intention of quitting her house for a less expensive one, dismissing the footman, and try-

ing, by every proper means, to live economically, and in a way very different from her former mode of life.

Time travelled on until near the close of the term, when Edith's last poetical recitation was to be Parnell's "Hermit." The examination in the other studies was to be private; but the declamation would take place before the assembled school, and was by far the most interesting exercise. She had committed it thoroughly to memory; the pupils flattered her upon her beautiful style of elocution; she had been pronounced the best speaker in the class; and, as the day approached for this exhibition, she felt very sanguine the prize would be awarded her. Nobody doubted it; the young ladies, as if by common consent, said she *must* receive it; competition there could not be, as her manner of speaking was unrivalled. Had Eliza Sedley been there, Edith would have been less susceptible to the flattery about her; for *her* calm judgment would have warned her of the possibility of defeat, and the disappointment resulting from it. But Eliza was in a distant land; and the excitement of her young friend was doing its work mentally and physically, showing itself in her faded cheek and unnatural restlessness of manner. It would be her last lesson at school; she was to return to a home made sad by recent misfortunes; and she earnestly wished to have one cheering thing to say to her mother, — to tell her she had been the successful candidate for the prize. A feeling so laud-

able deserved reward ; and she felt assured she should not be disappointed.

Does visible success always follow "laudable" exertions? The annals of the world tell a far different tale ; and their testimony is confirmed by the experience of almost every life.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Thus would I, at the parting hour, be true
To the great moral of a passing world;
Thus would I, like a just-departing child
Who lingers on the threshold of his home,
Remember the best lesson of the lips
Whose accents shall be with us now no more;
And I would press the lesson." — N. P. WILLIS.

THE day at last arrived in which the prize for elocution was to be bestowed. Many recitations had been made, all subject to criticism. When Edith's turn came, her cheek was flushed with hope, almost with certainty of success; for, on the morning of the day, the young ladies of her class had said they would make a Corinna of her, and crown her with a chaplet of evergreen, as they could not bestow *les lauriers*. Of course, all these flattering assurances of success heated Edith's imagination, and filled her mind with confidence. She turned her eyes, while speaking, towards that part of the room where her warmest friends were seated; she read approval in their faces; and she proceeded with all the energy of a

well-trained orator. She had reached that part of the poem where the hermit —

“Bursts the bands of fear, and wildly cries,
‘Detested wretch!’ But scarce his speech began,
When the strange partner seemed no longer man.”

She had exerted herself to the utmost, to give full force to the changes in these lines; her nerves had been overtasked; and, suddenly pausing, she burst into hysterical sobs. The silence of death pervaded the schoolroom: the pupils were moved almost to tears with her. Poor Edith! she tried to subdue her emotion; made an effort to speak, but in vain; her voice was gone. The silence was broken by a calm, cold voice, which said, —

“You may take your seat, Miss Dacres: there will be nothing more required of you.”

Her courage returned in a moment; her hands were removed from her face; and, throwing back the dark curls which had shadowed her cheeks, she inquired, “Am I to lose all chance for the prize, be allowed no second trial, because my overtasked mind could not bear so much excitement, and yielded to feelings I was no longer able to control?”

“No allowance can be made,” replied Mrs. Lanmeer; “it would be unjust to the other candidates, and a wrong precedent: *all* here are expected to exercise sufficient self-command as not to sob or cry at improper times.”

These words were uttered in a tone of asperity not

exactly in accordance with the sentiment just pronounced ; but there was no appeal, and Edith walked to her seat with a proud step. She had failed neither in memory nor in intonation ; she “ broke down,” as it was termed, from an over-desire of success ; she felt no *shame* of failure, and saw the prize bestowed on another without one sentiment of envy or anger. She was disappointed, but not abashed : her mind was of a cast too elevated to allow any mean feeling an entrance.

“ It will do me good,” said Edith. And it proved a salutary lesson ; for, had she been less susceptible of praise, had not her undue appreciation of her own gifts made her so confident of success, her nerves had been less excited, and no failure of voice would have probably occurred.

When the day was over, as, fatigued and dispirited, she was caressing Caroline to relieve her exhaustion, the scholars crowded round her with the wreath, to which had been added some hot-house flowers. She steadily rejected it. The successful candidate approached her with a beautiful medal, saying, in a sweet-toned voice, “ Miss Dacres, this ought to be yours : all you repeated of the ‘ Hermit ’ was in far better style than my recitation. Oblige me by accepting it : in justice, it is yours.”

“ Never ! ” said Edith ; “ do not ask it. But I would rather see a nature such as yours, Miss Burke, such freedom from selfishness, than wear a diadem or a medal, — such things are comparatively worth-

less ; but I will accept what I shall prize more." And she held up her rosy lips for a kiss.

What may be said of the head of an establishment, whose guidance over the young was so misdirected? Ought not some degree of sympathy to have been bestowed on one struggling with emotions beyond her control, — one who only needed a smile of encouragement to cheer her faltering heart? But no : the stern disciplinarian could no more feel as Edith did than the cold marble of Pentelicus could bloom and blush as a living rose.

How sad to have the warm feelings in the young sent back to wither and blight in their hearts, and, but for the sunny influences of *home* in after-years, to chill them into distrust of all who surround them !

But school-days, so falsely named "the happiest," have an end ; and the hour was fast approaching when Edith's connection with them would close. Preparations were making for the departure of herself and Caroline. She then learned how strong had been the bond of union with her companions, — far more so than she had been aware. She thought she loved no one but Eliza Sedley ; but now she called up the memory of so many kind acts, and pleasant words so fitly spoken, that she was half inclined to charge herself with ingratitude in not appreciating them more highly at the time. She endeavored also, in her goodness of heart, to shut out the recollection of severity in teachers. She tried to think they

were influenced only by the desire for the pupil's improvement, and wondered such emotions should arise in her mind, — what she never could have dreamed of two years before, when she entered Elmsgate House. There was no inconsistency in these feelings. She had long been in the society of many amiable girls; had shunned the selfish and ill-tempered; was conscious she should leave a good name behind for assiduity and patience. She had befriended the oppressed when occasion required, and, if she had been less social in her feelings than many of her school-fellows, had never shrunk from receiving attention. The word "tyrant," as applied to some individuals, was softened: she hoped to forget there was such a word. Making an effort to remember only kindness, tenderness in occasional illnesses, and the earnest wish to see her a scholar and a lady-like girl, her forgiving nature determined to dwell no more upon the questionable methods adopted to make her such.

With these feelings, the hour of parting was a sad one. Caroline had always been a great favorite, and was loaded with caresses. A dozen "good-bys" were spoken at once; "Don't forget us, dear Carrie!" was echoed all round.

Edith looked in each familiar face, — in many for the last time: the tears streamed over her cheeks, the paleness of which told how she suffered. She embraced the members of her class fervently; gazed at every familiar spot in the schoolroom: that room,

lighted in summer by the setting sun, through the casements of which had crept the wild rose and honeysuckle in such luxuriance, and which, in cold winter mornings, had seen the joyous group of girls crowding round the large coal fire, — that room was never again to be entered ; all its sad and its pleasant associations were now to be at rest. The playground was the last spot to be visited : here she had first learned to love Eliza Sedley ; here heard her first sweet accents of encouragement ; here had echoed the merry laugh from many gay hearts ; here the elastic step had bounded forward, to chase the flying girl who held the ball or struck the shuttlecock.

All was now ended : her companions were silently standing by her, watching the expression in her varying countenance, when she suddenly exclaimed, “ *Dear*, dear girls, may God bless you ! ” and, in a few minutes, the sound of the retreating carriage-wheels was all left to them of the loved Edith Dacres. The place which knew her knew her no more.

“ We loved thee passing well : thou wert a beam
Of pleasant beauty on this stormy sea.”

CHAPTER XVII.

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies."

AFFAIRS at Glendale Farm had changed but little. Mary Leslie might daily be seen pursuing her duties as a housekeeper, or seated in the library, either drawing or reading. Her walks to the cottages were generally alone, as Matilda was still at school, and Arthur had gone from Eton to Cambridge; and while Mr. Leslie was busily engaged on his estate, directing various improvements, Mary was necessarily thrown upon her own resources.

Though generally cheerful, she often longed for the society of Edith, and wished the time to arrive when she could be with her, as her brief visits during the vacations had been any thing but satisfactory. She often had letters from her, and her well-known handwriting was never received but with pleasure: still, the restraint under which she wrote

could hardly be said to afford an assurance whether she really was happy or not. Mary so much desired long and free conversations with her young friend, now she was old enough to be her companion; longed to look upon her bright, intelligent face, — to hear the sweet tones of her voice. Mrs. Courtenay had informed her of Edith's improvement in music, for which she had early displayed a very decided taste and fondness. In drawing, too, she had made great proficiency. The latter accomplishment Mary could enjoy with her; but she had no ear for music, and knew nothing of the science. The news of Mr. Courtenay's loss of property had been known some time at Glendale. With Mary, it was cause for deep sorrow; but Mr. Leslie had no sympathy with "speculators," and spoke of Mr. Courtenay as having induced his misfortunes by his own want of forethought.

"Who but a madman would have risked such an amount of property at one time, or on the fluctuations of a cotton-market? The dispersion of the West-India fleet in a hurricane, or their sudden arrival when supposed to be lost, is what all should be prepared for. Of course, either event affects the price of cotton."

This was his way of talking. Nobody contradicted him or disputed his opinion, as he seldom yielded to argument; his own judgment he was apt to consider infallible: but there were those who thought, if Mr. Courtenay *had* erred, it was in listening to

those in whom he had too much confidence, and being influenced by them. Luckily, the winds did not whisper to him in the United States what his *friends* said of him in England: exposed as he was to all the perplexities of pecuniary embarrassments, without the solace of his wife's encouraging cheerfulness or his children's presence, he was sufficiently unhappy without this additional cause for disquietude.

Nobody who witnessed his efforts to retrieve his affairs, or who knew one-half of his daily trials, would have ever uttered a reproachful word.

As Mary sat busily engaged with her needle, one morning, a servant handed her a letter, addressed to her father: it was sealed with black wax, and post-marked Glasgow. She immediately despatched the servant for him. When he entered the library, she said, holding the letter towards him, —

“Papa, I fear there is bad news from Scotland: this seal speaks of evil tidings.”

Mr. Leslie, during its perusal, appeared much shocked, and, handing it to his daughter, said, “My poor brother Arthur is dead!”

“Dead, papa?”

“Yes, my dear, he is dead, and, ere this, buried. I am, it seems, one of his executors, and must be off for Scotland immediately. How will you get on alone? Matilda cannot come home; and I should be very unwilling to ask permission for Arthur to leave college, even for a fortnight. What will you do?”

“Oh !” said Mary, “Edith Dacres has just left school. I will send for her, if Mrs. Courtenay will spare her for a week or two.”

“I am very glad you will have so pleasant a companion, Mary : you will have drawing, music, and all other things for your happiness.”

“Except your society, papa ; and the knowledge of your being on a journey in a bad season, and on a melancholy occasion, will add to my sorrow for your absence.”

“But, Mary,” returned her father, “you have said not a word about Arthur’s legacy : two thousand pounds for his name, so the will says.”

“He will make a good use of it,” said Mary ; “and I think it speaks well for my uncle’s confidence in him, to allow immediate possession : he is not yet twenty years old.”

“My brother always loved him,” replied Mr. Leslie, “and has often said he was proud he bore his name. Poor fellow ! I wish I could have seen him ; but his illness was of so short duration, I could not have reached him.”

The next day, Mr. Leslie left home. Mary wrote to her brother of his uncle’s sudden death ; and to Mrs. Courtenay, to ask for Edith’s society. She was not one of those young ladies who cannot bear to be alone, who need excitement to make the country endurable ; but her father so seldom left home for more than a day, that she felt time would perhaps move slowly without companionship with some

one. The weather, too, at that season, was cold, damp, and foggy ; the evenings long, when the pelt-ing rain or the sighing wind would alone disturb her solitude. No wonder Mary desired a bright and beautiful girl to occupy a place by the fireside or at the tea-table. The first evening of Mr. Leslie's absence was dreary enough ; for the weather had been threatening a storm all day, and, by eight o'clock, it came on with much violence. Mary sat alone in the library, busily engaged alternately with her work and a book : but the possibility of any exposure to her father in such a night caused too much excitement for either to interest her long ; and she sat listening to the wind until her usual hour for retiring, longing to see Edith, or to have Arthur at home, if only to hear a voice say the simple words, "Good-night !"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I do not love thee; yet, when thou art gone,
I hate the sound (though those who speak be dear)
Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear."

THE sun was still high in the heavens when the carriage which conveyed Edith and Caroline stopped before the house into which Mrs. Courtenay had removed. It was smaller than the former mansion; but it looked cheerful in the bright sunlight. The door was opened by dear, good Jenny; and, in a moment, the two girls were in their mother's fond embrace.

"Edith, my dear Edith, how tall you are! how you are changed! But you are pale, love; while Caroline looks as fresh as a rose, with her glowing cheeks."

"I have been fatigued and excited, mamma, during the past fortnight, but shall soon have a bloom equal to Caroline's. I only need rest."

"You find me in a different house from the one you left," said Mrs. Courtenay, dejectedly; "but

happiness is not the necessary inmate of a large house, and I think we shall be happy now we are once more together. Did Edward feel anxious to be able to return?"

"He said," replied Edith, "a few days before we left, that he hoped you would allow him to be at home in the next vacation, and not let him return to Rochester. He seems very desirous to go to America; threatens to tease until he is permitted to go."

"That will depend upon what his father writes: I shall have nothing to say upon the subject."

The joy of being again restored to Mrs. Courtenay and home soon made Edith's cheeks bloom as they were wont. The house was cheerful, yet quiet. She missed, for a time, the busy scenes of school-life, the regularity of her days' employments, and found it difficult at first, with so many interruptions, to obtain opportunities for practising either music or drawing.

Then there were so many young friends to see, Grandmamma Harcourt and Margaret to visit often, and the days were so short and so dark, — how was it she could accomplish so much at Eastgate House? She soon, however, fell into her old habits of studying a part of every day, reviewing her French, history, &c., resolutely determining to lose no time.

The subject of her reduced income was, at her request, not discussed: there were still a thousand

pounds left ; and she hoped the interest of this sum would meet all her expenses. Luxuries she could easily resign ; and a chance yet existed that her affairs might turn out, in a year or two, better than was at first expected.

She exerted every effort to keep up her mother's spirits, which were apt to falter when letters arrived from Mr. Courtenay. He evidently tried to write cheerfully : he often spoke of himself as returning to England a man of broken fortunes ; at other times, feared he should not be able to arrange his business to leave America, and that he should be obliged to send for his family. He seemed to mourn so much over the separation from them, that Mrs. Courtenay earnestly implored him to consult his own happiness alone. She was willing to undertake the voyage, to do any thing, only to know he was happy ; to think not of wealth, or to care for it : a bare competence for herself and children was all she could wish. One morning, as Edith entered the parlor, she found her mother in tears, an open letter in her hand, from which she learned Mr. Courtenay's affairs had proved in a worse state than he had expected ; in fact, he was a bankrupt. The whole amount of deprivations a failure brings is not realized at once : day by day, the severity of it increases. It were useless to dwell on the trials of a woman's heart and a man's fortitude when the sad truth bursts upon them that ruin is around. To be accustomed to luxury, and then suddenly to resign it, is no very easy task, even to a

well-disciplined mind. Mrs. Courtenay shrunk not from the blow ; but it was not possible at all times to be tranquil. A sad change had come over her domestic life, and she needed fortitude to bear it ; but the fortitude was given.

It was at this time that Mary Leslie's letter arrived, requesting Edith's presence.

"Mamma," she exclaimed, after reading it, "I cannot leave you, even for dear Glendale. You are oppressed by a weight of care I would gladly share with you : there could be no enjoyment for me while knowing you are so sad."

"My dear Edith," Mrs. Courtenay replied, "it is my wish, my *request*, that you go. This lesson of adversity I must learn to bear ; and, while I love you all the better for your willingness to give up your pleasure for my poor society, it would be a morally wrong thing in me to keep you from a friend whose kindness to you has been undeviating, and who is now alone : add to which, my regret at seeing your cheerfulness deserting you. Besides, you know my cousin's legacy is still left ; that will afford us various comforts. We are becoming accustomed to living without many of the indulgences we once thought indispensable : on this head, therefore, all anxiety is unnecessary. My grief is not for the loss of the elegancies of my former life, but for my husband's perplexities, and the mortification he suffers at the mistake he made in investing so large an amount of property in that unfortunate cotton specu-

lation. But we will not dwell on this subject. Go, dear Edith, and prepare for your visit. I shall often see Mrs. Harcourt ; will write you, and, I hope, in a cheerful spirit."

The day of Edith's departure for Glendale, she received, just before setting out, a letter from Eliza Sedley, dated Palermo. She had left France, and gone, for the winter, to Sicily.

"Judging from my eager desire to hear from you, I feel I am not deceived in thinking my letters give you pleasure.

"I arrived here only a few days since, and this morning heard of an opportunity to send you a letter by private conveyance. My health is steadily improving, and my spirits also. I try to think of the *past* as little as possible ; for the kind friends with whom I am travelling have claims on my cheerfulness ; and, for their sakes, I endeavor to be gay. I am continually occupied in sight-seeing ; but my chief enjoyment is in the scenery, which is beautiful beyond my feeble attempts at description ; and there are flowers in abundance, even now, in which you, dear Edith, would delight. In riding, we often wind among high mountains, and through richly cultivated valleys, where are seen the mulberry and the olive flourishing in their native soil to the highest degree of perfection, and, with them, what is called the 'Indian fig.'

"Our mode of riding would make you smile, as it is on mules, with muleteers to guide them ; though sometimes the *litíga* is used, — a sort of sedan, carried by two men on poles.

"Palermo is situated in a rich vale, surrounded by mountains, some of which are volcanic.

"We shall probably visit Syracuse ; and I hope to be able to enter the Cave of Dionysius. Do you remember how we used to enjoy the description of this cave, and the story of Arethusa, — her flight from the river-god Alpheus ? Who would have supposed *then* that I should so soon tread classical ground ?

"I am going, this evening, to a *conversazione*, where I hope

to see some Sicilian ladies, who, I believe, are generally educated in convents, and of course ought to be well informed, as I always imagine nuns must be highly intellectual.

"I very often think of you, dearest Edith, and the patient forbearance with which you bore the trials of a schoolgirl's life, — your disinterested conduct on so many occasions, your noble defence of the injured ; but, after all, we had our pleasures, many a source of enjoyment which we perhaps at the time overlooked. Write me as often as you can during the winter. Adieu (as Corinne said), ' Adieu, mon ami, — vous avec qui j'ai passé de jours si doux et si facile.'"

This letter imparted great happiness to Edith ; for she had not heard from Miss Sedley since she was in Montpellier, where her visit, she knew, was brief, as her friends had changed their plans before they arrived in France.

She went to Glendale in improved spirits ; was most affectionately welcomed by her friend, who was much struck by the graceful elegance of her figure, and the irresistible charm of her countenance. Her eyes seemed more beautiful than ever ; her luxuriant hair, "black as the raven's wing," was arranged so classically and so becomingly on her finely formed head, that Mary, as she kissed her glowing cheek, said, "Why, Edith ! I should hardly have known you, though but six months since I saw you, — may I say it ? — you are so improved."

"Well," said Edith, laughing, "it proves school-discipline has been beneficial in my case : but the heightened color in my cheeks may be attributed to joy in seeing you ; and for my increased height, to

the exercise I was compelled to take at East-gate House, where I was obliged daily to be in the open air during the time I was not in the schoolroom at my lessons."

"What will Arthur say to you when he next sees you?"

"Arthur?" said Edith, slightly adding to her color by a blush. "Is not Arthur at home?"

"Oh, no!" sighed Mary; "his college studies occupy all his time: he is now seldom at home. I doubt, had he not been in Cambridge, whether I should have sent for you, lest your attractions had turned his head."

Edith was soon settled in her delightful room, adjoining Mary's. They usually passed their mornings in the library, drawing, working, &c. Each day added to their enjoyment of each other's society.

Mary was occasionally called away to attend to her domestic concerns, and left Edith sometimes for an hour alone. They had been together but four or five days, when, as Edith sat one morning bending over her drawing-board, copying a little sketch of Morland's, she felt a hand gently laid on her head, and a voice whispered, "Look up from that drawing!" She started, and as she turned, expecting to see Mary, encountered the laughing face of Arthur. She became very pale, felt almost faint; when he bent over her, and, touching her hair with his lips, said, "Edith, I am shocked that I alarmed you: you look as if you had seen a spectre."

“Not very much like a spectre, Arthur, is your present appearance; but you did frighten me: you are such a man, too, now,—so tall, so altered, and”—— She stopped: she could have said, “so handsome too! Does Mary know you are here? Shall I call her?”

“No, no!” he replied, “I must see her alone: she will scold. The truth is, when I received her letter, announcing my uncle’s death, &c., I determined to obtain leave to come home for a few days; and, Edith, I knew you were to be here. I did so want to see you! You know we used to be good friends, when you were a little girl, and I a boy.”

“I hope we are so still,” she ingenuously said: “I could never bear to be otherwise, Arthur; for I owe a great deal to you. Do you remember the wreath offered me in this room?”

“Do I remember it? I shall *never*, never forget it.”

Edith felt, with the intuitive delicacy of a young girl’s nature, that she ought not to have asked such a question, and, blushing at her want of thought, advised Arthur to seek his sister.

Notwithstanding Mary’s rigid notions of duty, and her feeling that Arthur had done wrongly to leave college when he well knew his father would be displeased, she could not help being glad to see him; and, as she looked at the manly, elegant figure before her, she was indeed proud of him, because she knew, with all these outward graces, there was so strong an intellect, and so much sterling worth.

The only drawback to the happiness of the trio was the fear of Mr. Leslie's disapprobation, when he should hear his son had been at home.

How many memories came thronging over Edith, as she thought of her happy childhood at Glendale, all brought back by Arthur's sudden appearance ! The flowers he used to bring her ; the walks by his side ; his soothing tenderness when she was grieved or out of humor ; his patient endurance of her petulance, — all these garnered treasures of memory rose tumultuously before her, until, fearful of giving way to her emotions, she went to her chamber to tranquillize her heart, and restore serenity to her countenance.

She was very young to have such feelings, — the symptoms of incipient love. But Edith had always been very mature : she was thoughtful beyond her years ; and, as it was said in the early pages of her history, her insatiate perusal of fiction had tended to give an air of romance to her after-life. But it was a romance so much modified by her good sense, there was little danger of its ever rendering her ridiculous. Her education had been carefully superintended by competent teachers ; her mind was stored with useful knowledge to a degree unusual at her age ; and the constant thought of Mrs. Courtenay's affection had stimulated her in every effort for improvement. She was, therefore, at fifteen, what few girls are at eighteen, — womanly, discreet, and dignified.

Four days passed quickly away, and Arthur was obliged to return. He had walked with his sister and Edith, read to them, enjoyed all so brief an interval would allow, and left them.

There were no tears, no sorrowful looks, at parting ; but a cheerful "good-by," and he was "off and away." How he was missed ! how were every act and word dwelt upon ! Edith tied on her bonnet for a walk, and passed through a lane, which, in summer, used to be one of her favorite places for a stroll, Arthur still in her mind, though he had been gone some hours ; still thinking of his radiant smile, his rich-toned voice. She felt a little ashamed of this indulgence, and turned her steps homewards. She met Mary in the parlor, who said, "You do not look as bright as usual to-day, dear Edith ; yet the weather is charming for the season." Edith's color rose to her temples : she was silent. She would not say why she was less animated, and she would not equivocate. At last she said, as she tossed her bonnet on a table, —

"May I sing to you ?"

"Do," said Mary ; "and let the song be, 'My mother bids me bind my hair.' I believe I have taste enough to appreciate that ; but do not make a mistake, and say Arthur for Colin."

"Mary, if you tease me, I will not make you another visit in the spring, as I have promised. Remember, I am not a little girl now ; I shall be sixteen next June : you ought to treat me with more respect."

CHAPTER XIX.

“ My boy, thou wilt dream the world is fair,
And thy spirit will sigh to roam,
And thou must go ; but never, when there,
Forget the light of *home*.”

IN a few days, as Mr. Leslie was at home again, and she knew how much Mrs. Courtenay would need her society, Edith returned to Milton. She found her friend very cheerful, though looking paler, and somewhat older, than previous to her husband's misfortunes : even three short weeks had affected her appearance. Caroline had been invited by Mrs. Harcourt to continue her studies with Margaret Granville, under a private governess. Marion attended a day-school. In all other things, the household went on as usual.

Much as Edith enjoyed her return to Milton, the society of her mother, and all the hallowed influences of *home*, her thoughts frequently wandered back to Elms-gate House with strong and affectionate interest. She often thought of the hours spent with Eliza Sedley in study ; their quiet walks together, while the

scholars were gayly frolicking in the fields and meadows ; and then those delicious twilights, when, seated in the bow-window of the schoolroom, they conversed on serious subjects, and indulged their imaginations in anticipating the future, whether it would be gilded with the sunshine of prosperity, or shadowed by the clouds of adversity. Then would follow the memory of Fanny Gordon ; the uncertainty of her fate ; the anxiety to know if she were happy, still more if she were worthy their interest. A mystery hung over her which no one could solve ; for the interdict at school with respect to her had been scrupulously obeyed. Edith occasionally conversed with her mother about her ; related various anecdotes of her generous, self-sacrificing character, undisciplined as it was in many points. Mrs. Courtenay sympathized with her daughter in the affection she continued to feel for Fanny, and remarked that her errors were doubtless the result of over-indulgence, and the neglect of a fervent religious principle in her early education. Her young mind had never been trained to the cultivation of those powers which would, as she advanced towards womanhood, have guarded her from the *indiscretion* of which she had been guilty, to give her conduct the mildest term.

“ But, mamma,” Edith said, “ her mother was a great invalid, and doubtless unable to superintend the early education of her daughter.”

“ I am aware of that, Edith : but she was rich ;

and wealth, you know, *does* command the services of intelligent, valuable women. One could easily have been found, as a private governess, who might have animated this misguided girl to the performance of *duty* in an extended sense.

"I trust, Edith, our fears for her moral rectitude may never be confirmed ; for you have interested me exceedingly in your young friend. I need not tell you, I should rejoice, if, at some future day, you should meet, and Fanny be enabled to remove the cloud which now rests upon her conduct. Your good sense, Edith, will tell you that the young person who is careless of censure, who bids defiance to public opinion, from what she calls independence of character, proves a want of rectitude of mind which but too often ends in the loss of reputation. Her clandestine correspondence, her disregard of the rules of the school, her elopement, speak but too plainly of her indifference to delicacy and propriety."

Edith could not help acknowledging the truth of her mother's remarks ; but she still clung with romantic interest and pity to the fascinating but faulty Fanny. Had they parted for ever ?

Jenny still remained in Mrs. Courtenay's family, and became every day more valuable. It was impossible to over-estimate the worth of this domestic : her devoted faithfulness ; her earnest efforts to save the feelings of her mistress in every way, that she might not realize the change in her circumstances ;

the same attentive kindness in waiting upon her, the same respectful deportment. A thousand thoughtful little acts betrayed the nobleness of this woman's nature, and her grateful recollection of the kindness which had watched over *her* in the illness and helplessness of former days.

Jenny's attachments were very strong and enthusiastic ; her prejudices equally so. She thought no portion of the globe could be compared to her beautiful native Wales. It was pleasant for the young people to hear her describe its mountains, and praise its invigorating air. Her manners, far superior to those of most persons in her rank of life, together with her good judgment and sound common sense, made her very companionable. One of her accomplishments was to repeat parts of Gray's "Bard ;" to condemn the "ruthless king," &c. : but, had the questions been put to her which were applied to Miss Edgeworth's Rosamond, poor Jenny could no better have explained the meaning of —

"Helm or hauberk's twisted mail ;"

of —

"High-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay," —

than did the little girl who boasted she understood the poem perfectly.

Before the winter set in, a season seldom very severe in England, Mr. Courtenay had written for his son Edward to come to the United States, under the guardianship of an experienced captain who commanded a ship in the London trade.

This was a grief, and yet cause for comfort, to his mother. She dreaded to part with him for such a distance; but she knew that his impetuous nature needed a father's guiding and restraining hand. And then, to use the language of another, "he had conceived that strange and unaccountable predilection for the sea, which, like all extraordinary propensities, when once it has taken possession of the mind, is not to be expelled by any thing but dear-bought experience."

The little family was now in full activity with the preparations for Edward's sailing. He was all life and energy at the prospect of a voyage; thoughtless of the night-watches of his mother, who would shrink from every howling wind, and whose imagination would be filled with images of danger from rocks, waves, and shipwreck on that stormy coast to which his ship was bound. His ideas of the sea were only of excitement, bustle, and enjoyment.

The captain who was to attend to his outfit had fully indulged his fancy for a sailor costume; and one morning, when all were busily engaged in his service, he burst into the room with "How do you like my sou'-wester and monkey-pea?" His mother hardly knew him in this disguise: but he looked so manly, so handsome, the children kissed his flushed cheeks in great glee; and Edith, throwing her arms over his shoulders, exclaimed, "How can we part with you? Dear Ned, you never were so much of a brother as you are at this moment."

Mrs. Courtenay looked on sorrowfully, as she witnessed the pleasure the young people seemed to feel in the novelty of Edward's appearance and position as a sailor. He caught her tearful eye, and said, gayly, "Now, mother dear, don't look so serious: your face is as long as the yard-arm of a frigate."

"My dear boy, where did you learn all these sea-terms?"

"Oh!" said Edward, "a boy at our school taught me. His father commands a ship, and took him one voyage. He enjoyed a sailor's life, and used to tell his mother 'not to whimper.'"

'There's a sweet little cherub sits smiling aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack.'"

"But, my dear boy," his mother replied, "you are going as a passenger: you will not, I trust, think of going aloft, or in other ways exposing yourself."

"Mother, I mean to learn all I can of a sailor-boy's life, and not *skulk* in the cabin half my time; but I will promise to be very careful." And, with this assurance, he seemed to feel there could be no cause for anxiety.

As the parting hour approached, all looked very sad: even Edward's gay laugh was hushed, and something like a shadow was on his brow. His mother kept up her courage nobly; for, while she lamented his departure, she knew he would be a comfort to his father, as he was now a companionable, intelligent boy.

CHAPTER XX.

"He left his home with a bounding heart,
For the world was before him,
And felt it scarce a pain to part,
Such sun-bright beams came o'er him.
He turned to visions of future years :
The rainbow's hues were round them ;
And a mother's bodings, a mother's fears,
Might not weigh the hopes that crowned him."

EDWARD was gone ! The first sorrow at parting with him had subsided, and affairs in the household had resumed their quiet routine, when Mrs. Courtenay received a letter from London concerning some business of her husband's which required her presence. As she should be at the house of an intimate friend, she determined to take Edith with her. Caroline was to go on a visit to Margaret Granville ; while Jenny was to be the guardian of Marion, and to devote herself entirely to her.

The Christmas holidays were at hand ; and Edith promised herself much pleasure in passing that season in the metropolis.

The preparations were soon made, and Mrs. Courtenay, with her adopted daughter, established in Mrs.

Harsdale's beautiful mansion in Portman Square. To feel herself actually in London was positive delight to Edith.

She had never been there since her childhood, and remembered nothing of it except by name.

The day after her arrival proved a fair one; the streets, for a wonder, quite passable. Miss Harsdale, with a young gentleman as escort, went, with Edith, sight-seeing. The first visit was to Westminster Abbey. Edith's feelings of previous excitement were subdued into hallowed serenity when she found herself within its sacred walls, — the last resting-place of the royal dead, the poet, the statesman, and the hero. She paused thoughtfully in "Poets' Corner," — the monuments of Milton, Spenser, Gray, her beloved Goldsmith. As she lingered in this classical region, as it may be called, Mr. Pembroke, the gentleman who accompanied her, said, "Are you a lover of Gray and Goldsmith? I ask, as I hope to find sympathy with my own admiration of them."

"I am exceedingly fond of both," she eagerly answered; "their poetry was among my school exercises. The 'Elegy in the Country Churchyard,' and 'The Deserted Village,' — I do not believe familiarity would ever make me indifferent to their beauties: but we must move to the monuments of Elizabeth, and Mary Queen of Scots. I never could respect Elizabeth, with all her mighty intellect, her stores of knowledge, &c. I know how much her government has been applauded; but who can approve her

private feelings? Poor Mary! I never can think of her without deep pity for her fate; though I never exalted her as my friends do, — the affair of Darnley's death, her marriage with Bothwell, &c. But I ought to apologize, sir, for these remarks. You will, indeed, imagine I am fresh from school: do pardon me."

The next visit was to the Hall: indeed, many hours were spent within the stupendous abbey, until every thing had been at least glanced at. The next day was given to the Tower; to the survey of the beautiful armor; the regalia; the Traitor's Gate, through which so many sad victims had passed.

A morning was spent at St. Paul's, several days in visiting picture galleries, &c., until the "lions" of London had been all seen.

The business which brought Mrs. Courtenay was finished, and she felt anxious to be at home.

Edith had enjoyed a great deal; but nothing delighted her so much as the attentions her mother had received, — attentions which had lent sunshine to her prosperity, but whose sympathizing tenderness had diffused a more than ordinary light over adversity, depriving it of much of its bitterness.

All were well at home, — the children delighted with the gifts brought by Edith. Mrs. Harcourt and Margaret were on the spot to welcome them; and, although after an absence of only three weeks, the quiet of Milton seemed very delightful.

The winter passed insensibly away. There had

been letters from Mr. Courtenay announcing Edward's arrival ; his happy meeting with this idolized boy ; his courage, undaunted by a passage across the Atlantic at that season. Mr. Courtenay held out hopes of visiting England in the summer ; but, if he could not arrange his business, his family must exercise patience, and feel all would be for the best : he should strain every nerve for a re-union ; for the separation was every day becoming more painful. He wrote long letters to his two daughters, enclosing others from Edward, whose graphic description of his passage out was so interspersed with sea-terms that it was utterly incomprehensible ; and, as Caroline closed hers, she said, " He ought to have sent a nautical dictionary to explain all the parts of a ship ; for she scarcely knew the difference between the bowsprit and the stern." Edith, as the children talked of these letters with so much interest, recalled the hour when she saw the " Boadicea " pass up the Thames, her flags at half-mast, bringing her father's remains from Halifax. She shuddered over the recollection, and left the room to hide from Mrs. Courtenay any manifestation of feeling. She still cherished the memory of her father among the hidden treasures of her heart. Not a day passed that he did not mingle with her thoughts ; and though she tried to look the future bravely in the face, intended to meet all trials patiently and humbly, still that her father was no longer living, that he was lost to her for ever on earth, never failed to inflict a pang.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace;
Throws out the snowdrop and the crocus first;
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumbered dyes;
The yellow wall-flower, stained with iron brown;
And lavish stock, that scents the garden round;
Anemones, auriculas, enriched
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves;
And full ranunculus, of glowing red."

THERE were times when Edith, with all her strength of mind, felt deeply the reduction of her fortune. She often saw Mrs. Courtenay struggling with means scanty when compared with her former opulence. The children were denied indulgences to which they had been accustomed; and while her generous nature longed to be enabled, by presents, to make some amends for their privations, she was compelled resolutely to deny herself this gratification, as justice demanded she should remunerate Mrs. Courtenay for the expense of her maintenance. This was a purely business transaction, and as important a debt to be paid as if she had been a stranger in the family.

She would often sit and plan for the future ; revolve in her mind how she could increase her income by the exercise of her talents. She painted and drew very finely for one so young. Could she become a teacher ? or, what was better, could she not paint flowers for sale ? There was a refinement in the latter occupation exactly suited to her taste ; and she determined, when the spring was farther advanced, to commence copying the violets, cowslips, and lovely primroses which still grew on Windmill Hill, and endeavor to find purchasers, either among her friends, or the fancy shops so numerous in London. But she decided to keep this a profound secret from all but Mary Leslie. With the thought of her came the delightful idea of her long visit in May at Glendale, all around which the wild treasures of the fields were so abundant. Filled with these anticipations, she saw the spring advancing ; she watched the opening buds ; and, when the snowdrops appeared, she eagerly gathered a bunch, and never felt a happier hour than when she saw them blooming beneath her pencil. She was astonished at her own success, and, filled with joy, ran to Mrs. Courtenay, exclaiming, as she exultingly held them up, " Dear mamma ! have I not succeeded well ? These are my first flowers from nature. I mean to paint a great many this summer." Mrs. Courtenay could not resist the beautiful smile which irradiated the young enthusiast's face, and, kissing her affectionately, replied, " Your perseverance, my dear child, makes

every thing you undertake look well ; but, with the numerous occupations you already have, how will you find time for painting flowers ? ”

“ I rise so early in warm weather that I shall gain a great deal in that way. And then, mamma, how delightful the occupation ! When I am at Glendale, I shall be out before the dew is off the grass, to bring home my treasures ; and, as Matilda will be from school, we shall enjoy so much while Mary is directing her household affairs.”

Mrs. Courtenay made no reply ; for she thought next summer, or, at farthest, next autumn, might bring a great change to them all, and it was best Edith should enjoy all she could in anticipation : the cloud would overshadow her full soon enough.

In spite of Mrs. Courtenay’s general firmness of character, her feelings at times would have vent. She found it very difficult to conceal from Edith the anxieties by which she was oppressed. Her husband’s prolonged absence was wearing out her spirits ; and his business was in so complicated a state, that she saw but little prospect of his return to England.

The only relief to her mind seemed the idea of joining him in America ; and what an undertaking it would be for her to cross the Atlantic without him ! These feelings made her long for the time of the visit to Glendale, that she might often see Mrs. Harcourt, and talk with her of her plans, her fears, and her anxieties. But, while Edith was at home, she was so constantly with her, so unwearied in acts of

attentive kindness, so quick to discern a shade of thoughtfulness upon her brow, that she made constant efforts to be cheerful, and sedulously avoided recurrence to the subject of her future, lest she should disturb the tranquillity of this cherished daughter.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree,
Without a flower at all.

“ Our outward life requires them not:
Then wherefore had they birth ?
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the earth.”

IN about a fortnight, the spring bloomed in great loveliness ; the early anemones were in perfection. Edith was in a revery of enjoyment, painting a bunch of these sweet flowers, when she was recalled suddenly to consciousness by the noise of wheels. The sound ceased : she looked up from her painting, and saw Mary Leslie stepping from the carriage. She ran joyfully to meet and welcome her ; for they had not met since Mr. Leslie's visit in Scotland.

Mary's first inquiry was if Edith was ready to go to Glendale.

“ Not to-day, surely,” said Edith.

“ I shall not insist on your return with me ; but my father talks of going to London, to be absent a

short time. I shall send to-morrow for Matilda, and you must be ready the next day. While he is gone, I shall need you both so much. Arthur, too, is at home. Now, don't blush, Edith. He has planned so many delightful rides, walks, and drives; and then the country is looking so exquisitely lovely. The hedges will soon be in bloom; the violets are already out; and every thing so fresh, and so fragrant too!"

Edith's heart beat high at the prospect before her; but then came a vision of her mother, looking so pale and dejected, she felt it would be ungrateful to leave her. But, when Mary talked to Mrs. Courtenay, she was struck with the earnestness with which she urged Edith's departure. She spoke of her assiduous attention to painting as if she dreaded its effect upon her health, and felt the change of air, and the society of more cheerful people, would benefit her in all ways. It was decided she should go on the day appointed.

Edith's habitual neatness, and love of order, left little to be done in the way of preparation for a visit; and, when the carriage arrived, she took an affectionate leave of her mother, who had never seemed so dear to her,—embraced the children tenderly. Marion said, as she clung to her, "Don't stay a great while, sister: it is very dull when you are away." She promised to return as soon as her friends would spare her, and, in a few minutes, was on the road to Glendale. Within a mile of the house, near a rus-

tic bridge, — always a favorite resort spot with Edith, — she saw a gentleman leaning over its rude railing. She knew it was Arthur. She could not help feeling pleased to have him thus kindly welcome her, as he came forward with his sunny smile and extended hand. At the moment she was about to thank him, Matilda sprang from behind a hedge, laughing, as she said, “Arthur and I were determined to surprise you. John, let down the steps!” In another minute, they were rapidly driving towards the house, in high spirits.

Mary was at the hall-door; and never did a brighter, happier group assemble than Edith and her three friends.

Mr. Leslie was often so cold and stately, that she could not help being glad he was absent.

The days at Glendale passed so cheerfully and so rationally, Edith seemed to feel her happiness had never been so great. She heard frequently from her mother, who seemed tranquilly happy. She often rode with Mary and Matilda, accompanied by Arthur, on horseback. Sometimes they passed the morning in gathering wild flowers, or took their work into the woods, while Arthur, stretched on a rustic seat or lounging carelessly on the greensward, read to them. In the midst of these rural enjoyments, the painting was not neglected. A number of beautiful flowers had been copied and arranged in Edith’s portfolio. Her friends told her they rivalled nature in their exquisite tints. She had mentioned to Mary

her desire to increase her small income, for Mrs. Courtenay's sake, and the latter highly commended her independent spirit; for, in one accustomed as she had been to live in the midst of luxury, she felt these efforts were deserving of all praise.

Cheerful as Edith's nature was, there were hours when she felt so fatigued by her assiduity in painting, that her spirits faltered, and she looked almost ill. Her bright smile was not as often seen, her elastic figure was not as firm or vigorous; and Mary, for a time, expressly forbade her touching a paint-brush, as she saw the inroads made by her close application. After resting a week or two, she rallied, and looked more like her former self. Mary said to her one day, "Edith, you will be seventeen before a great while: what shall you do on your birthday?"

"I shall hope to be very quietly happy, as I always am here. I am not fond of celebrating birthdays, as it is called. I am now growing old enough to be thoughtful. Sixteen once seemed a beautiful era in life; but you know, dear Mary, I have had cares beyond my years, and causes for reflection in mamma's altered circumstances. I cannot help sad thoughts for her, even when I seem the gayest. You know she is every thing to me."

"Every thing?" said Arthur. "Do you admit no other claims on your affections? Are we nothing to you?"

The tears stood in her eyes, the color faded from

her cheek, as she looked at him and said, "You must have understood me, Arthur. Next to mamma, you are my dearest friends. I have neither brother nor sister: what should I be but for mamma and this little circle?"

Arthur was shocked to perceive how he had touched her feelings; and, taking her hand, he said, affectionately, —

"You shall never need a brother, Edith, while I have life and health. Do forgive my thoughtless speech!"

She smiled upon him as she released her hand from his grasp, and her face soon again beamed with its usual brightness; but in her heart was a feeling she could not define, and which agitated her for hours after she had left the parlor and sought her own room.

Mr. Leslie had returned, and was deeply engaged in the business connected with his estate. Matilda had gone back to school; and, ere long, Arthur's college vacation would end, and he would be in Cambridge. Edith thought much of Mrs. Courtenay, and felt she ought to be at home; but Mary would not listen to any suggestions of the kind, and, indeed, overruled all that was said on the subject.

Edith had, by her engaging sweetness, the gentle and lady-like dignity which characterized her conduct, intertwined herself so closely round her heart, that she felt she could not yet relinquish the enjoyment of her presence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"For my sake wear this:
It is a manacle of love. I'll place it
Upon this fair prisoner." — CYMBELINE.

THE morning on which Edith completed her seventeenth year dawned beautifully on creation; but, she knew not why, a sense of sadness was upon her, and the sun seemed to shine out in mockery of her disturbed feelings. She started, that such thoughts should pass through her mind, and resolved on that day to try, for the future, so to govern her feelings as to allow nothing so irreverent to have an entrance. She was well, surrounded by friends, in the possession of all her faculties: why, then, was she sad?

As she entered the breakfast-room, all wished her many happy returns of the day: every one seemed bright. When the morning meal was finished, as she was going for her drawing materials, Mary followed her into the hall, and, taking her hand, gently clasped round the slender wrist a bracelet of her hair, with a clasp set in pearls. Delighted surprise mantled Edith's cheeks with a rosy flush. She threw

her arms round her friend's neck, saying, as she rested her head on her shoulder, —

“How shall I thank you for this precious gift? I cannot tell you, in language sufficiently earnest, how dear it will always be to me. A thousand thanks, dearest Mary!”

Mary smilingly said, “You know, Edith, I am not given to quoting, even from my favorite Shakespeare; but I will say, as Posthumus said to Imogen, —

‘For my sake wear this:
It is a manacle of love.’”

The grateful girl gave her assurances of never-ending affection, repeated her acknowledgments of her friend's thoughtful kindness, and tried, for the remainder of the day, to be cheerful; but her thoughts reverted to her father, his death in a strange land, Mr. Courtenay's protracted absence, the loneliness of her mother and the two girls, who perhaps were missing her more and more every day. But Arthur was going to read to his sister and herself from Scott's poem of “Rokeby,” which, though published several years before, she had never read; and this cheered her.

They spent the morning in the library, and the hours passed; for hours and days will pass, let us feel as we may. Late in the afternoon, Edith started for a walk, hoping the beauty of the weather might dispel the feeling of sadness which had hung over her. She strolled on, unconscious of distance, stop-

ping occasionally to gather the wild geraniums which grew in abundance on the banks. The wild roses, too, were just opening, — those sweet harbingers of summer. As she paused to admire the peculiar loveliness of a bush which was forcing its branches through a hawthorn hedge, she thought of the spring-time of her life, so sadly overcast: its summer in perspective seemed to offer none of the bright hopes or joyous anticipations so natural to a girl just seventeen. The tears *would* come to her eyes: they fell slowly over her cheeks. Where were her resolutions so lately formed? She roused herself immediately to the remembrance of the Christian lesson she had been striving to teach herself, and, dashing the tears from her cheeks, looked smilingly at the bright heavens above her, and felt her *trust* was unshaken. She turned towards the house. At that moment, Arthur came from a coppice, the other side of the path, and suddenly stopped her progress. Observing traces of recent sorrow in her countenance, he looked anxiously at her, and said, —

“Edith, why do I see you thus? Are you unhappy? Do you feel your separation from Mrs. Courtenay a greater trial than you expected? Is there any diminution in Mary’s tenderness towards you? What *is* the matter?”

He asked these questions so rapidly, Edith had no time for reply. When he paused, she eagerly said, “To your hurried inquiries, Arthur, I can readily answer. I have no *recent* cause for dejection.

tion. Your sister's affection is unabated. You know, at times I am disposed to indulge regrets for the past ; I cannot yet wholly overcome them ; but I do make great efforts to be cheerful. It has been my earnest prayer, ever since the loss of my fortune, that God would enable me to bear the change patiently. I feel I can triumph over many obstacles, that I can arrive at some degree of eminence, if I put into action all my capabilities ; and, at the moment you appeared, I was trying to think of some plan. But no matter ; this is my birthday, and I am an ungrateful girl to have even a cloud on my brow. Why are you pulling those buds from that lovely bush, and preventing my enjoyment of watching their expansion from day to day ? You cannot love flowers as I do."

Arthur turned his dark hazel eyes towards Edith's face. A smile of ineffable brightness was on his lips, which irradiated his whole countenance. She blushed, she knew not why. He held a bunch of the rosebuds towards her, and, as she received it, observed every thorn had been removed.

"It is thus, Edith," he gently said, "I would willingly remove from your path every cause for disquietude, and brighten it with the sunshine of hope and happiness. My love for you has been the dream of my boyhood, the joy of my youth, and I confidently hope may be the comfort of my maturity. It is no romance, Edith ; but a deep and earnest feeling, which time will only strengthen. May this

evening's sun witness the truth of my asseverations ! may it witness the sincerity of my affections ! " At that moment, he drew from his pocket-book a ring, which he placed on her finger ; and, ere Edith had time to recover from her confusion and agitation, he darted into a path through a grove, and disappeared. She stood transfixed, gazed on the ring, — a single diamond in a circlet of gold. She turned from it to the thornless rosebuds, which spoke so feelingly of the refinement of Arthur's mind, and, pressing them to her lips, hurried towards the house, and, on entering her chamber, petitioned Heaven to aid her in the path of duty. What a change had the day wrought ! Could it indeed be true that Arthur loved her ? could he, as the rosebuds indicated, wish to remove all anxieties from her mind ? Was not the ring an emblem of unbroken faith ?

Hitherto, her feelings towards him she had believed to be those of an affectionate sister, depending upon the fraternal relation as a bond between them.

A new aspect was now to be placed on their intercourse. She felt the freedom of their conduct was ended : he could no more be to her as he had been. A new sensation was throbbing at her heart, a host of feelings crowding into her mind ; and she was emphatically bewildered by the conflict. But there could be, she well knew, no happiness for her independent of a strict line of duty. She hoped to be guarded against all ambitious aspirations, all wish even to encourage feelings which might be inconsis-

tent with the gratitude she owed Arthur's family. He was an only son, and she doubted not his father had lofty views for him. But she was unable to think collectedly; and, to calm her spirits, she seated herself at the open window to watch the declining day. The sun was approaching the horizon, partially hiding its effulgence by purple and gold clouds, which floated like a curtain around its brightness, and softening the distant landscape with that neutral tint so peculiarly harmonizing in its effect. Her hand rested on the window, clasping the rosebuds. A sudden burst of departing sunlight flashed on the ring and the clasp of her bracelet. She started to a sense of the impropriety of keeping the former, at least until sanctioned by her mother's approval and Mary Leslie's knowledge. How could she tell them without confessing her feelings also? Her courage fled before even the thought of it. After a few minutes spent in this mental conflict, she drew the ring from her finger, and placed it in her trinket-box, put some of the rosebuds in a vase, and with the rest, and her wild geraniums, in her hand, descended to the parlor. She found Mr. Leslie and Mary at the tea-table, wondering at the delay of one usually so punctual. It was hardly possible for her to throw off the embarrassment of her mind. Her confused manner attracted Mary's attention: she half-laughingly said, —

“Edith, you appear weary. I fear you have had too long a walk; or you may have met with some

adventures in your lonely stroll: you certainly look as if you had something to tell."

Edith became more and more confused, but summoned courage to say, —

"You know, dear Mary, I am always meeting with *incidents*, as they are termed in novels: but there is not enough of the heroine in me to call forth much of modern chivalry; nor are there such gallant knights as of old, who risked life, and all but honor, to win a lady's smile. So I believe I must be content to receive a few rosebuds, the first of the season, instead of laurels: see this lovely little branch Arthur gave me!" She had exerted herself to the utmost to assume this playful manner; but her cheek became suddenly pale as she finished.

Mary's eyes told that she knew there was something beyond this simple offering of rosebuds; but she inquired, —

"Where is Arthur? Why did he not accompany you home?"

"He did not go with me to walk: I met him just as I was about to return. I saw him but for a few minutes, and he turned into the path through the oak-grove."

At this moment, Arthur appeared. Mr. Leslie looked displeased, but spoke not. Mary rallied him on his sudden love of botany, so beautifully illustrated in the specimens on the table.

"I did not gather the geraniums, only the rosebuds. Do you not remember this is Edith's birth-

day? that she has reached the age calculated to call forth all the poetry, as well as botany, in a young man's nature, particularly when associated with one so dear to our little family?"

He glanced at Edith's hand as it rested on the table. A cloud passed over his countenance. He looked at his father, whose stern expression silenced all further remarks.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Twilight's soft dews steal o'er the village-green,
With magic tints to harmonize the scene.
Stilled is the hum that through the hamlet broke,
When, round the ruins of their ancient oak,
The peasants flocked to hear the minstrel play,
And games and carols closed the day.
All, all, are fled; nor mirth nor music flows,
To chase the dreams of innocent repose.
All, all, are fled; yet still I linger here!
What pensive sweets this silent spot endear!"

EDITH rejoiced to find herself once more in the solitude of her own room. Her feelings had been tried to the utmost during the day. She was startled by the emotions she experienced in her heart, and could not help regretting that Arthur, by his unexpected declaration and his gift, had exceeded the limits of friendship. She seemed to have passed, within a few hours, from girlhood to womanhood; her child-like feelings gone, and a future opening before her, with cares, anxieties, and trials, for which she feared she might not in reality be prepared, as when she boasted she "could overcome obstacles."

Still there was something soothing to her mind, cheering to her orphan state, that one so truly good,

so really noble in intellect, as Arthur, so stern in principle, so unwavering in duty, had indeed chosen to share his heart with the yet undisciplined being she knew herself; but, in the midst of these feelings, rose the fear that Arthur's father would frown upon this attachment at his early age. She was poor. It was true, she had at times encouraged the hope that a pecuniary loan her father had generously granted to a distant relative might be restored to her; but this was a sorry foundation for even a small fortune. She dared not longer indulge in any feelings connected with the events of the day. She looked out upon the calm night: the song even of the nightingale had ceased; not a leaf moved; a young moon, with her pale, silvery light, was disappearing behind the woods; the stars shone out in their clear, beautiful lustre; Nature was at rest; and Edith closed her window, with emotions so strangely diversified as hardly to believe in her own identity.

The morning dawned gloriously. The heavens, with the deep, clear blue, had but a few light clouds to obscure their brightness; and even these seemed to turn "their silver lining to the light." The sun shone cheerily on the landscape, drawing delicious perfume from the flowers which bloomed beneath her windows; and then the buds of yesterday had opened, and stood proudly in the vase in which she had placed them. The lambs were skipping and jumping about on the green banks, while their dams were resting their plump, woolly sides on the young

grass ; a beautiful peacock was strutting, and displaying his splendid plumage, looking as if none should be admired but his beautiful, *useless* self ; the rooks were building ; and the young trout were springing at the early flies in the little sparkling brook that ran near the house ; and beyond might be seen the garden, almost gaudy with flowers, — daffodils, tulips, the double-flowering almond, hepaticas, geraniums, &c. In the distance stood the village-church, with the grassy lane which led to it. How Edith gazed on all this accumulation of beauties ! how her heart expanded as she contemplated the loveliness around her ! Was there no foreshadowing of distant lands, — cold, bleak, and destitute of all these sunny influences ?

Soon after breakfast, she had an opportunity of telling Arthur her intention of writing Mrs. Courtenay. Her nature, so open, so confiding, recoiled from any thing like concealment ; and to keep his gift of the ring secretly in her possession, was, in her estimation, a violation of confidence towards her best friend. She also told him she should value his birthday-gift as a token of his friendship which she hoped never to forfeit ; that, should her mother sanction her retaining it, she intended it should exercise talismanic influence over her future conduct, checking her too frequent indulgence in vain regrets, &c. Arthur smiled at her ingenuous relation of all she meant to do, approved every resolve, and, taking

her hand as she was about to leave the room, said, —

“Edith, for *friendship*, I hope you will, in future, use the word *affection* ; and may you, my dear girl, always preserve the open, noble nature which first taught me to love you when a child !”

“I am no longer one,” she replied, releasing her hand ; “and there must be no infringement of the respectful tenderness of brother and sister. I am, I hope, too truthful to deny you are very dear to me ; but we are not lovers. Let us be kindly attentive to each other’s happiness ; but let our intercourse be that of friendship only. You will go, I hope, and finish the morning at your studies. I shall soon be so absorbed in copying some of your rosebuds for Mary that I shall forget the ring, and even yourself.” Arthur shook his head doubtingly, and they parted.

The letter to Mrs. Courtenay was written, though with more of effort than Edith expected. She was doubtful how her mother would receive her avowal of attachment to Arthur. She had doubts, too, of the propriety of encouraging such sentiments towards one who was to fill an important place in society. It was very difficult to write as she had formerly done : to raise the veil from her heart brought mingled joy and sadness. She had hitherto treated Arthur without the least restraint : she had never known any cause for concealing her feelings. There was, in fact, nothing in her pure and noble nature

to be disguised ; and she was sure *he* was all manliness, and his heart "Truth's own throne." But every thing was changed ; and she felt a degree of reserve stealing into her heart, which she feared would oblige her to change her deportment, and no longer be the playful girl who always appealed to him as to a safe counsellor.

Arthur, too, was so rigid in his ideas of decorum ! How even her slight faults would trouble him ! He would regard her, perhaps, with very different eyes from the indulgent ones of former days ; but she could try to keep so guarded and vigilant a watch over her conduct as to save him from *many* uncomfortable feelings. She should now be stimulated to extra exertion, from the knowledge he had placed his happiness in her hands.

In a few days a letter arrived from Mrs. Courtenay, in which she addressed Edith with great tenderness, but deemed it necessary to speak with plainness on the important announcement she had made. She wrote : —

"Your letter has, indeed, caused me much anxiety, and subject for reflection ; and, while I respect the beautiful ingenuousness with which you describe your feelings, I regret most sincerely the bestowment of your affections thus early in life. Are you able, Edith, to judge, at seventeen, what will be for your happiness ? You know nothing of the world ; and thus suddenly to enter on its cares and anxieties, is, in my mind, to be deeply lamented. I say *anxieties* ; for what girl, whose affections are another's, can be without them ? Every thing connected in future with Arthur Leslie's happiness, health, prosperity, is to be interwoven with

every thought. And, allowing all goes on well for a time, that you are happy in each other's attachment, you must soon separate: then will begin the hours of sadness, more numerous far than you imagine. A separation from one we love can never be without sorrow. A host of unexpected cares arise; and to bear them cheerfully, or even submissively, is no ordinary task. You will wonder why I write this, as if to throw a shadow on your happiness; but, my sweet girl, I have my reasons, and I wish to prepare you for some trials you might not have anticipated. But of this you may be assured: I have confidence, both in Arthur and yourself, that you will see the justice and *common sense* of my remarks, nor let them diminish your affection for me. The ring, your birthday-gift, I can see no impropriety in retaining, provided you have the approval of Miss Leslie. You mean 'it shall exercise talismanic power over your conduct.' This is not the highest motive of action, Edith: but let it be aided in its operation by your strength of principle and religious sense; and I hope it may indeed produce as good an effect as in the fairy tale. I have no fears, my child.

"My next suggestion to you is to return to Milton. I am very anxious to see you. Mr. Courtenay's letters from the United States are any thing but cheerful; and I am now longing to be enlivened by your presence. As my two daughters are absent all day, I am often lonely, and, I regret to say, dejected."

Edith closed her mother's letter with a feeling of disappointment. There was an evident attempt to conceal something which affected Mrs. Courtenay's spirits: her own sunk under a foreboding of ill. She hesitated whether to show it to Arthur, or await his inquiries: she dreaded to disturb his happiness. While she was debating what to do, he entered the parlor, and asked her to ride on horseback. "As the

weather is delightful," said he, "it will do you good to inhale the invigorating air."

The horses were brought round, and they were soon cantering cheerfully over the beautiful road which led towards the village. Edith had been early taught to ride, and sat a horse very gracefully. She never looked so well as in her black-beaver hat, with its drooping feather, and her well-fitting green riding-dress. Arthur, too, was a faultless horseman: his figure, so manly yet so graceful, was just fitted for a cavalry officer. And many were the kind looks bestowed by the cottagers on the youthful pair as they passed; Arthur lifting his hat so courteously to the women, and Edith gently bowing her head to all whom she recognized. There was more than usual deference this morning in Arthur's deportment; and Edith felt, more deeply than ever, how much there was in him to respect, as well as love, for his refinement and delicacy. Yet on that very morning, and with such feelings, she gave a striking instance of inconsistency, to use the mildest word. But, we repeat, she was not faultless. In passing a gentleman's house on the road, she attempted a display of her horsemanship any thing but agreeable to Arthur. There was a party on the lawn, who appeared to have assembled for a breakfast *à la fourchette*. When opposite the gate fronting the party, Edith touched her curb-rein, which her spirited horse would never bear. He reared, plunged, quite in warlike style. Arthur became anxious, although he knew the ani-

mal was too well trained to be likely to throw his rider. Yet she had been told never to pull the curb unless Spanker appeared disposed to gallop, and then very cautiously. One of the gentlemen ran with offers of service. Arthur, with more of haughtiness than he had ever before displayed, said, "I believe I am fully equal to the care of this young lady."

"No doubt, sir," replied he, "if your own horse do not prove restive, which he seems a little disposed to be."

"In that case, I can take care of both, perhaps. However, I do not mean to forget my courtesy: I thank you, sir."

Edith looked at Arthur with some alarm: both herself and the horse were quiet *now*. His brow was clouded, his lips compressed; but he spoke not a word. Shortly he recovered the balance of his temper: he was perfectly calm as he said, "How could you make yourself so conspicuous, Edith, by doing as you have?"

She was shocked by the question: she had never seen him displeased with her before. How could she, by her folly, bear the idea of having ruffled a temper generally so serene? She was overcome, and ingenuously confessed to the charge of being for the moment forgetful of his feelings, in becoming what he called "conspicuous," by her unnecessary display of horsemanship. "I am at times thoughtless, Arthur, but not wilful."

He was touched by her candor, and, placing his hand on her horse's neck, patted him, and good-humoredly thanked him for not throwing his rider.

When they arrived at home, as Edith was lifted from the saddle, it was with even a gentler manner than usual. She felt his tenderness, and blushed to think she could have done aught that might lessen his happiness, trifling though it might be. He looked archly at her as she was entering the hall: —

“Are you fatigued, Edith?”

“No, indeed!” she said: “I could live on horse-back; there is no enjoyment to me like it.”

“Except when you are reprovèd.”

“Say no more, Arthur. I feel every hour how much discipline I need. How vain is my boasting, when I talk of what I can accomplish, and yet do so little for my own improvement!”

“You are but sixteen: I have hopes of you yet.” And, holding out his hand in token of peace, they separated until dinner.

No questions had been asked of Mrs. Courtenay's letter, no allusion made to it; and Edith decided to speak to Mary on the subject nearest her heart, ere she exchanged a word with Arthur.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ ‘ And is he gone? ’ On sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude!
’Twas but an instant past, and here he stood!
And now ” —

CORSAIR.

THE next morning after the ride on horseback, Edith thought she had braced her mind to sufficient strength to speak of the ring, and entered the parlor, where Mary, she knew, was drawing. She looked very pale, and trembled excessively. Mary raised her head, saying, “ Edith, I know why you are thus agitated ; and, to save you more excitement, I will say, I know *all*. Arthur felt it his duty to open his heart to me, as to a sister who has been almost a mother to him. I am not prepared to say I rejoice in this attachment, though I might have foreseen it. You are both so young, the future so uncertain, that I almost grieve at it. My brother’s studies are yet unfinished ; he has not decided on any profession ; and you are hardly old enough to know your own feelings. You certainly need not be told how well I love you both : still, I cannot conceal my regret.

Years must pass ere you could think of marrying. Besides, my father, with many excellent qualities, is, you know, very stern. He calls it folly, and desires nothing may be said about it." She paused. Edith's proud spirit was roused. She was struck with the calculating nature of Mary's speech ; she could not bear it. Her bosom heaved with almost convulsive emotion as she at length said, —

"Does Mr. Leslie think me unworthy his son? I am as well born, as well educated : why, then, am I rejected, scorned?"

"Stop, stop!" said Mary, very quickly. "No one, my dear Edith, ever hinted at your being *scorned* or *rejected*. My father calls all love-affairs romance, nonsense, forgetting how he once felt. There is, there can be, no objection to you. I would not alter you, Edith, if I could ; for your little flashes of — temper, shall I call them? — I often think, give an additional charm, as they are always so unexpected. I am very willing you should love Arthur, and that he should love you. I hope, in time, you may be united ; but, at present, be to each other as you have been. Place the ring on your finger ; and may it exercise the influence over you which you told Arthur it should ! He deserves you should do all in your power for his happiness." She pressed the weeping girl in her arms, and the conversation was not renewed.

In a few days, Edith spoke of returning to Milton. She had staid beyond her original intention, and

thought it best, situated as she was with regard to Arthur, to be at home. Mary regretted parting with her, but felt she acted with the delicacy expected of her, and could not conscientiously urge her to remain. As to Mr. Leslie, he preserved his stoical indifference ; though probably he was glad to hear she was going, as " he hated scenes," as he used to say, " particularly love-passages."

The day of departure came. Edith was nearly ready, and entered the library to collect her drawing materials. She saw Arthur with one of her little sketches in his hand, looking earnestly at it. She advanced to the table, began taking up her pencils, &c., when he said, " May I keep this outline of *the* rosebuds ? " The memory of that afternoon when he gave them, her recent conversation with his sister, rushed to her heart. She laid her head on the table, and burst into tears. Arthur, affected by her emotion, said, tenderly, " My dear Edith, are you wise thus to yield to your feelings ? What fresh cause for disquietude ? Tell me all. Are you not my own, my affianced ? I have now a right to share all your griefs." She raised her head to meet his affectionate glance, thanking him by her grateful looks for his sympathy, but was unable to reply.

" Well, Edith, I intend to visit Milton before I return to Cambridge. I shall write you often ; and, if any thing has occurred to disturb you, I shall in time know it, I am sure. Remember this, my dear Edith, that I shall yield not one iota of my inde-

pendence to unnecessary or unreasonable restrictions imposed by my father." He left the room ; and her lips had refused to utter one word.

The carriage came to the door. Mary and Mr. Leslie stood in the hall to say good-by : the former kissed her fondly ; the latter extended his hand ; but " do not forget us " was not said this time.

As the coachman was about to put up the steps, Arthur suddenly prevented him ; and, ere Edith was aware of what he was about to do, he seated himself at her side, ordered the coachman to drive on, and then said, —

" I mean to accompany you a mile or two. My horse has been gone some time, and will be waiting for me at the bridge."

" How thoughtfully kind you always are, Arthur ! And I am so glad to be able to tell you how deeply I feel all you said to me in the library ! I could not speak then, for my heart was too full : but you know I do appreciate your affection ; and I will endeavor to make myself worthy of it. Here is the talisman ;" and, drawing off her glove, she displayed the ring. He clasped the slender fingers in his, and talked cheerfully of days to come. The bridge was in sight ; the man appeared with the horse. Arthur pressed the hand he held affectionately, and, opening the carriage, which stopped at the bridge, jumped out, mounted his horse, and, raising his hat in token of farewell, was soon out of sight. Some time elapsed ere Edith uncovered her face, which

she had hidden with her hands when she saw the last look which Arthur turned towards her. She was alone, with only the recollection of him to cheer her ; and yet it was so pleasant to think she was the object of his best affections, and that she had another besides herself upon whom she could lean ! If trouble should come, he would cheer her in the dark hours ; and, if happiness were before them, he would share all with her. She indulged in building a few castles in the air, until a distant peal of thunder aroused her to something like fear that the horses might start. But the storm passed off by the river ; and she soon saw the bright sun again, and the raindrops glistening like diamonds on trees and shrubs. The Thames, too, as the carriage skirted along its banks, seemed more than usually crowded with ships. The dear old fort !—there it was in all its grandeur ; and, in a short time, she was safely at home, and in Mrs. Courtenay's fond embrace. The pallid face of her mother seemed to strike her more forcibly than on her former return from Glendale.

“Mamma, you are ill, I know !” was her sudden exclamation, as Mrs. Courtenay stood before her in a bright light. “Why have I not been informed of it ?”

“I have not been ill, my dear child, only anxious ; but, now you have returned, I mean to exercise more. We will walk together into the country round Milton ; and I think, in a few weeks, you will see restored all the bloom which usually belongs

to thirty-eight." Edith made no reply ; but she felt, as day by day passed, they brought but little amendment in her mother's looks ; though it was evident, for her children's sakes, she made every effort to keep up her cheerfulness, and appear in better health than she really was. Edith determined no temptation should again take her from this excellent friend, except for a day or two. Perhaps a feeling of self-condemnation was in her heart, as she remembered the happiness she had so recently enjoyed at Glendale while her mother was so lonely. It was in her power, however, *now* to devote herself to her, and, by every-day evidence of affection, prove how strong she felt were her claims on her gratitude. She would read to her, walk with her, and often, at twilight, sing to her some of those touching melodies which have almost the enchanter's power of soothing. Mrs. Courtenay's taste in music was so like her own, that she knew exactly what would lead her mind from dwelling on the stern discipline of every-day life, and turn it to more hopeful views.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day,
Before the ripened field the reapers stand
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate,
By nameless gentle offices, her toil."

IN a short time after Edith's return, she received a note from Henrietta Baker, of whom she had seen but little since the time she was under her care, during Emma's illness, some years before. The note contained a request that she would be present at her wedding, which would take place the following week. Invitations were extended to Caroline, Marion, and Margaret Granville. They were all delighted at the idea of a wedding, and talked of nothing but what they could give the bride. It was at length decided the two Courtenays should present her with a handsome, though not very expensive, Bible, urging to give "their own money," which they had been saving for some time. Margaret was to go with them ; and, when the morning dawned in brightness, the little coterie sat off, laugh-

ing, talking, picking flowers, &c. "Sister," said Caroline, "what have you in that box you carry so carefully?"

"Time will disclose," she replied.

They travelled on, until, Miss Baker's cottage appearing in the distance, they all exclaimed, "We shall soon be there!"

They found many of the neighbors assembled to attend the bride to church. She looked very prettily in her simple white dress and neat straw bonnet; while the bridegroom, a fine-looking young farmer, seemed the very embodiment of happiness. The children presented the sacred volume, which was gratefully and reverently received. "This," said Henrietta, "will cheer us in sadness, Robert; and teach us humility, if our farm prosper."

They soon proceeded to church. Just as the bride entered the path leading to the church-door, the little girls who had been her pupils in the village school came forward, and scattered flowers from baskets which hung on their arms. Henrietta turned very pale at this proof of their regard, though her heart beat quick with pleasure. The bells were ringing out a merry peal; and the birds, as if not to be outdone, added their music to the joyous sounds. The ceremony over, the party returned to a rustic collation; and, when the bride had thrown aside her bonnet, Edith stepped forward, and, after placing a wreath of orange-blossoms and white roses on her head, gave her a beautifully simple gold

locket, in which was a small black curl, with the initials E. D. on the back. She softly kissed the fair bride, whispering, "How well do I remember all your kindness to me when very young!" Then came Margaret's turn to make her offering. "This is from grandmamma and me, as tokens of our regard;" and she opened a little case, and presented a silver butter-knife and pair of sugar-tongs. All were delighted. The butter was cut with the knife; the tongs to be reserved until the evening meal. The collation over, Edith and her young companions prepared to leave, wishing all happiness to the bride and bridegroom. As they walked homewards, Edith's thoughts were with Arthur; and how did she miss the friendly arm on which she had, of late, so often leaned, as they strolled about the lovely domain of Glendale! But she knew he was where duty called him, and she suppressed the rising sigh. She returned to her mother so gratified by the scene of the morning, in witnessing the happiness of her humble friends, that she diffused cheerfulness into Mrs. Courtenay's mind, which gave a brighter tone to her conversation for the day. It had now become a positive *duty* with Edith — a duty which she performed unwaveringly — to try by every effort to divert her mother from dwelling so much on Mr. Courtenay's prolonged absence, and the future prospects of her children. There was no selfishness in her nature. Her home-duties were always cheerfully performed. She never alluded to the luxuries

which had disappeared from the household and her own wardrobe, but calmly and patiently endured the privation of what she once deemed indispensable.

About the time of harvest, Edith went for a day or two to Glendale: she was unwilling to leave Mrs. Courtenay longer. Arthur was absent: but he had written frequently since their separation; was in good spirits; and she was contented not to see him, provided she knew he was well.

The "harvest-home" was celebrated the day after her arrival. Immense tables were spread in the great hall, round which were gathered all the tenantry and laborers of the farm. These tables literally groaned beneath the piles of food. Pre-eminent was the roast beef of Old England; then the ale, which was liberally quaffed, inciting the relation of wild stories, and the enlivenment of song. At the close of the dinner, Mr. Leslie, his daughters, and Edith, looked in upon the merry party, who all rose as the family stood at the hall-door. "Be seated, my friends," said Mr. Leslie, laying aside his usually frigid manner. "I bid you all welcome: much happiness to you!" He then took a seat at the table for a short time. The men filled their glasses, and rose to drink the "squire's health." Then came "Master Arthur," when the hall shook with their boisterous hurrahs. Edith clung firmly to Mary's arm, to still the beating of her heart. Her friend felt for her, and, as she pressed the hand which rested so confidently on her arm, gently said,

“You do well to love him, Edith: he deserves it all.”

It was a scene of simple and grateful enjoyment, — gratitude to God for his bestowment of an abundant harvest ; and also to the master, who never failed in his efforts for the happiness of his tenants and laborers.

The people departed without any evil results from the ale: all moved off to their homes with clear heads and steady feet. An offence from too great indulgence would not have been overlooked. Still, we admit, it would be well were the ale omitted, even at the “harvest-home” gatherings.

When the two friends had retired from the drawing-room in the evening, Mary suddenly entered Edith’s apartment, and, seating herself by her, burst into tears. Edith was surprised, and exclaimed, in alarm, “What can be the matter? You in tears, Mary! — you, whom I have never seen weep!”

“I am very foolish, you will doubtless say or think ; but I cannot help it. You know, Edith, how frequently, of late, my father has been in London, — how often he has walked about the rooms, as if measuring. His movements have been mysterious to me ; but I never question him when he seems disposed to silence. But now the mystery is solved. He informed me, just after you left the room, that he was going to furnish the drawing-rooms anew ; had purchased the furniture, mirrors, curtains, &c. ; and the upholsterers would be here in a few days from

London to arrange every thing. I started in perfect astonishment. "Papa," I said, "why are you dissatisfied *now*, when every article used to be so valuable for mamma's sake?"

"For a moment his calmness forsook him; but he recovered his self-possession, and said, —

"'We are exposed to more company than we formerly were. Arthur will leave college: his friends are all fashionable young men: in fact, I wish my house to look more like those of other people. All the pictures, and what you term fancy articles, are to remain untouched; and every thing which was particularly devoted to your mother will belong to Arthur, yourself, and Matilda.' He left me. I feel as if papa must be losing his mind thus to have changed. O Edith! I cannot bear to have my dear, familiar sofas, curtains, &c., displaced for modern finery; and so unkind, not to tell me!"

Edith's mind was relieved by finding nothing more serious had occurred. Her first thought was of Arthur; but Mary's tears did not seem so much the effect of deep sorrow as some sudden excitement of her nerves. After mutual regrets at this singular step of Mr. Leslie's, they parted for the night.

Edith returned to Milton the next morning, but not until she had strolled into the garden, visited the summer-house, the grapery, and every spot endeared from having been enjoyed when Arthur was with her. She plucked a few stray flowers, which she placed in her bosom almost with the feeling of one

who was destined never to gather another from these spots so hallowed by memory.

The moment she entered the parlor of her home, and saw Mrs. Courtenay's face, she knew something unusual had occurred. Her mother did not speak for a few minutes, and at last said, —

“Edith, I have sad news. In a letter just received from Mr. Courtenay, he tells me there is very little probability of his coming to England for some time: he wishes me to go to him, and ere the winter sets in.”

Edith gasped for breath: a deadly coldness spread over every limb. Go to America ere winter! and the autumn now advancing! It were as if the arrow of Death had touched her. How could she bear even the thought of leaving England, Arthur, Glendale, all, for a residence in a foreign land? or, worse, to act a selfish part, — to desert her best friend at a time when she was so valuable to her? The weight of misery was greater than she could bear; and, bursting into an agony of tears, she yielded wholly to her feelings.

Mrs. Courtenay was again silent for some time. At length she said, “Edith, I understand all you feel, — the struggle between affection and your sense of duty; but, my child, I must not, I will not, influence you in the slightest degree. You shall decide for yourself; and, whichever way it may be, I shall feel you have acted from a stern sense of rectitude.”

"O mamma, mamma!" she exclaimed, as, with almost passionate fondness, she threw her arms round Mrs. Courtenay, "I will go with you! What would my sufferings be, should we never meet again, if I had permitted you to go to America without me? I can part with Arthur, believe me I can, if duty demand it. He never would approve my letting you go alone; and he may perhaps go some time hence to the United States. I do not believe I could love him if I thought him capable of urging me to remain in England. You seem, dearest mamma! at this moment, all the world to me. No, no! I never will leave you until I see you restored to Mr. Courtenay, to papa!" Exhausted by the intensity of her emotions, she threw herself on the sofa, as on that sad day when she learned her father's death, and, burying her face in the pillow, remained a long time perfectly still. Her airy visions had all faded away, — Arthur's visits in the winter; the happy intercourse by letter when he was not with her; the many little pleasures he had planned when they could be together, — all, all, by one fell blow, were struck down; and, in their place, rose a voyage across the Atlantic, with no cheering thing for her on arrival but to meet Mr. Courtenay; a foreign land; strangers; three thousand miles of ocean between her and the friends of her girlhood, the chosen partner of her young and pure affections. Dreary, dreary indeed, was the picture; and well might the afflicted girl hide her face from the day.

Truly had her mother foreboded her sufferings when she wrote her, that, "when separation occurs, then come the hours of sadness." A host of unexpected anxieties had arisen, &c. She now understood fully what she meant by this sentence; its force had indeed come upon her.

The silence in the room had in it something of awe. Mrs. Courtenay sat at the window, her head leaning on her hand, waiting patiently for her child's grief partially to subside. Delicacy forbade her saying any thing more. She knew what Edith was, and left her to her own guidance, convinced she would act conscientiously and wisely. At last, Edith's head was raised: with the light of Heaven's approval in her eyes, animation in every step, she approached her mother, and said, solemnly, "I am glad, mamma, I am not irresolute, with all my faults. My mind is now in comparative ease: I am perfectly decided. I have asked of my God to strengthen my resolves; and I feel the strength will be given me. Let us now, dearest mamma, call the two girls, and go out and walk. The fresh air will do us good: I seem much to need it, and you are very pale. To-morrow will be time enough to talk of this sudden and distressing requirement of Mr. Courtenay."

Edith called Caroline and Marion, and together they all strolled towards Milton Church. Edith slightly objected to this walk; but Mrs. Courtenay said, in a voice tremulous from internal suffering, "It will do me good: do not object, dear Edith!"

The day had been one of those mild autumnal days when Nature seemed to sympathize with saddened hearts. They entered the churchyard, the profound silence of which was broken only by the wailing of the southern breeze among the yew-trees, which stood as sentinels to guard the hallowed ground. They advanced towards the graves of Ellen and Emma, adorned by white marble slabs. The children had gathered clusters of asters and golden-rod on the way: with intuitive knowledge of their mother's feelings, they scattered their humble offerings on their sisters' graves. The silence remained unbroken: the hour seemed too sacred to be invaded by human voices. Edith bent towards the earth, and, gathering the scattered remains of some flowers which had bloomed but lately, carefully held them in one hand, while, with the other, she gently drew her mother from the consecrated spot, fearing the effect upon her already-oppressed spirit. But the walk had a salutary influence upon Mrs. Courtenay, and the evening passed calmly away.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

THERE was very little sleep that night either for Mrs. Courtenay or Edith. The latter rose unrefreshed, pale, and languid, but, immediately after breakfast, wrote to Arthur, and told him how severe had been the struggle, but how firm was her decision to accompany her mother. She might remain in the United States only one year, which, she cheerfully said, would soon pass. Then there would be one source of happiness left, to write freely to each other of all that might occur. "I know, dear Arthur, you will reconcile yourself to this event of our separation, by believing all is for the best. Think of poor mamma at sea, with her two little girls, without me! You know how well she loves me. I could not have the heart — no, I could not — to remain behind, even if I were sure of seeing you every week, because I should feel I had played a selfish part; but

I shall count the days and the hours until we meet again."

Immediately upon the receipt of this letter, Arthur obtained permission to leave Cambridge, and hastened to Milton. He found the family very sad, but calm. He knew it was a great undertaking for a lady to prepare for a voyage, with neither husband nor son to aid her. He therefore pointed out to Mrs. Courtenay, with respectful tenderness, the fatigue and anxiety attendant on the preparations for a voyage, to accomplish which she would be at sea during the shortest days, when there was little daylight, and those long nights so much to be dreaded. It would be easy to write Mr. Courtenay how long it would take to get ready to leave England. There must be a sale of furniture, clothing to prepare suitable for a voyage, business transactions of various kinds to settle: how was it possible to be ready in less than three months? at which time it would be midwinter. After repeated conversations, and as many resolves, it was decided Mrs. Courtenay should write her husband, and desire him not to expect his family to leave England until the beginning of March. Her anxious life for eighteen months had affected her health; and she evidently was not equal to the hurried exertions she could once have made.

Arthur made no effort to alter Edith's determination to accompany her mother. He loved her with as devoted an affection as the human heart is capable of feeling; but his sense of right told him what were

Mrs. Courtenay's claims to her love and gratitude. She had received her, as a dying bequest, from a friend she loved very sincerely ; had watched over her infancy with more than a parent's tenderness ; had guarded her youth, as far as possible, from every thing that could shadow its brightness ; and, when the fatal intelligence reached England that she was an orphan, her affection seemed to redouble, — her watchful care of her became almost devotion. Could he ask Edith to remain in England under any other protection than that of his sister ? and *that*, with his father's feelings, was not at all what he should desire for her happiness. Arthur's courage faltered, perhaps, a little, when he thought of the lapse of time ere they should meet. Separated by an ocean, day after day, month after month, must pass on without seeing each other. But he knew the separation could not weaken the affection of two such hearts ; and his sanguine nature led him to hope some change of circumstances which would restore them to each other, perhaps, in a year. His collegiate course, when ended, would leave him, in a degree, master of his own actions. His property, independently of his father, amounted to three thousand pounds, one thousand of which had been left him by his grandfather, the same to each of his sisters. This, with a profession, whether of the law or the ministry, would be enough to begin the world. Arthur inclined to the latter, and often, in the indulgence of visions for the future, fancied himself the pastor of

the village-church of Glendale, — Edith his companion in his walks of charity, visits to the sick and the afflicted, and soothing the departing spirit.

It has been said, "Youth is the season of romance. Its buoyant spirit must soar till weighed down by earthly care. It is in youth that hope lends its cheering ray; and love, its genial influence. It is then the world seems so fair; and if, in maturer life, we smile at the romance of youth, and lament, perhaps, its aberrations, yet we must often regret the depth of our young emotions, the disinterestedness of our young affections, and that enthusiasm of purpose which, alas! we soon grow too wise to cherish."

Arthur, then, may be forgiven if he blended with sound sense and clear discernment a shadow of the same romantic feeling which had often made Edith so interesting to him. He remained but a very short time in Milton; went to Glendale on his return to Cambridge, as he never wished his father to believe him clandestine in his visits at Mrs. Courtenay's. He did not find the latter at home: he was again in London. The new furniture had arrived, was in place; and his loved household gods, he said, all displaced.

Mary seemed sad at the prospect of Edith's removal to the United States, but agreed with her brother in thinking duty pointed the path, and she ought to pursue it. He returned to Cambridge, much relieved in his anxious feelings by his visit to

Milton, and the certainty of Mrs. Courtenay's voyage being deferred for a month or two.

In due time, a letter was received from Mr. Courtenay, in which he blamed himself, that, in his anxiety to see his family, he had been so thoughtless as to suppose his wife could be prepared during so short a time. He wrote for her to have no thought about taking her passage, &c. ; he would manage all that ; find some well-built ship, experienced commander, by whom he would write, and desire him to call upon her, stating when his ship would be ready for sea, &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do propose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it: for man is a giddy thing; and this is my conclusion."—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THE family in Milton soon commenced the task of arrangements for the sale of furniture, and preparation of every thing necessary for a voyage. Mrs. Harcourt and Margaret looked forward, with great dread, to a separation from their friends; the advanced age of the former making it very improbable she should ever see them again.

Mrs. Courtenay's attachment to both was very strong: so deep, indeed, was her reverence for Mrs. Harcourt, that the bare mention of her departure filled her mind with deep regret; and often did Edith watch the mournful expression of her mother's face when the subject was talked of: tears, which she vainly strove to hide, flowed from her eyes when the young people asked questions concerning the sea, the Americans, &c. It was a sorrowful idea to leave

her country, with all its fond associations ; the friends of her early life ; the town where she had passed so many happy days ; the old ivy-covered church where her marriage vows were registered ; and the graveyard where her children reposed. In the desolation of her spirit, there was one ray of sunshine, — the meeting with her husband and son : but for this, she could not have borne the fatigue, as well as excitement, through which she had to pass. Had she known all that was before her, her gentle nature would, indeed, have quailed at the prospect. The deep shadows of the future were mercifully hidden.

At Christmas, Arthur was often in the family-circle. His vacation at Cambridge would last some time, and he devoted as much of it as possible to Edith. What changes had occurred to the affianced pair ! and how soon they were to separate ! But, whenever this subject became too serious in its character, when anticipations otherwise than cheerful presented themselves, Edith would point to the diamond on her finger, and hush his voice at once.

One morning, while he was assisting her to pack her drawing-case, Jenny brought him a letter. He opened it hastily, knowing it was Mary's handwriting. He seemed, at first, very much excited and agitated, and then burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. " I do believe, Edith," he at last said, " my father is mad, and other people too, — strange subject, you must think, for merriment. Read this

letter, while I go into the town to order my horse ; for I must be off within an hour."

"GLENDALE, Dec. 27, 18—.

"DEAREST ARTHUR, — I feel in such a state of feverish excitement, I can hardly guide my pen ; but I write by papa's orders.

"You know he has been in London for some days. No one was at home but Matilda and I on Christmas Day. You, dear brother, were happy ; and I have not a word to say about loneliness. This morning, I was seated in the library, when I was startled by the noise of carriage-wheels, which stopped at the hall-door. I ran to see who or what was to be seen, when the carriage-door was opened : my father stepped out, handing a lady. They entered the western drawing-room, where, fortunately, was a large fire. I stepped forward, when papa took my hand, leading me to the lady, saying, 'Mary, allow me to present to you Mrs. Leslie, *my wife*.' I was perfectly thunder-struck. Not knowing what to do, at length I stammered out, 'Papa, why was I not prepared for this event?' I trembled like an aspen-leaf. I know my color all left my cheeks. We stood looking at each other, until Mrs. Leslie broke the silence by saying, in a very pleasant tone, —

"'I trust I may be welcome, though unexpected.'

"'Welcome' ! To have my dear mamma's place filled by a stranger, and to talk of welcome ! What sort of woman can she be *thus* to enter a family ? I could only say, 'I will do all in my power, madam, to evince my respect.'

"'Where is Arthur ?' inquired your father. 'Is not Matilda at home ?'

"'Arthur is in Milton,' I said ; (how he scowled !) 'Matilda is up stairs.'

"Do you think he will venture to talk of 'love-passages,' scenes, romance, &c. ? I wonder if they are all nonsense *now* ? It seems they have been married several days. Papa wishes you to come home immediately, to pay your respects to Mrs. Leslie (I never will call her mother, and I am sure you will not).

"She is a very fashionable-looking woman ; rather handsome ;

somewhat haughty, I suspect. Oh, dear, dear! how am I to support this change? Why was papa so reserved? Was there not a degree of deception about the whole business, commencing with the new furniture? I would not, Arthur, be disrespectful; but I cannot help the inquiry. And then, to think of papa, at fifty, with a new wife, and he so often talking of your folly in being in love! When you arrive at this sentence, how you will laugh! Can you help making the contrast? Pray, come home immediately. Give my love to dear Edith; yes, a thousand loves,—some to Mrs. Courtenay and the two darling girls.

“Your affectionate

MARY.

“P.S. — The servants are half crazy, talking so noisily, ‘Master has brought home a wife!’”

Arthur, when he re-entered the house, had parted with his merriment. The strangeness of his father’s proceedings admitted, he thought, of very little excuse. He had a perfect right to marry again, if he wished. Why all this mystery? It was almost insulting to children who were grown up. But he put away his uncomfortable feelings, and hastened to say good-by to Edith. “I shall hear from you or see you again soon, Arthur?”

“No, no! I am, you know, never in a hurry either to write or to come. What a question, Edith! I am half tempted to scold. But good-by, my own, shall I say?” And he was on his way to Glendale in another minute.

The preparations for leaving England went steadily on. The furniture was sold, and the family at Mrs. Harcourt’s, at her urgent request, until letters could arrive from Mr. Courtenay naming the ship in which

they were to embark. Before the house was closed, Mrs. Courtenay had a conversation with Jenny, wherein she learned her desire to accompany her to America. When Mrs. Courtenay represented to her the difference of her present situation from what it had been when she first lived with her, the true nobility of her character shone forth. "O madam!" she replied, "I enjoyed many privileges, when you were in prosperity, far beyond my station. I will not leave you in adversity. I will follow your fortunes to the end, let them be what they may. I want to see my dear master; be with the young ladies: this will be happiness enough to me. Do not speak to me about wages; please, ma'am, don't!" These memorable words from a faithful servant spoke volumes for the disinterestedness which, disregarding all pecuniary advantages, was willing to sacrifice love of country and friends to go to a distant land, under a change of circumstances such as she had never anticipated.

To Edith, the arrangements with Jenny gave particular pleasure, because she knew how much her services would be needed at sea,—services such as no one could so well perform for her mother; and, then, the two girls were so dependent on her, no stranger, however capable, could have supplied her place.

There were times when, as we have before suggested, Jenny felt her power, and perhaps exercised it in household regulations, feeling she knew *best*

what ought to be done ; but this love of power was never exhibited either in impertinent observations or replies. Her demeanor was at all times respectful to Mrs. Courtenay and Edith. Even reproofs for her belief in signs and omens seldom elicited any thing beyond wonder that people were such unbelievers ; and, from the fact that two or three events had occurred as she predicted, she watched the times and the seasons, like a second Norna of the Fitful Head.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Not even savage Nature's sternest child,
'Mid tangled forests born or deserts wild,
But he has something felt, when doomed to part, —
The last sad hopeless sinking of the heart!
Nor lives there one who has not still deferred,
And would not longer shun, to speak that word:
The grave of love, and dear affection's knell,
Are found, alas! too oft in that farewell."

THERE is an old adage which says, "It is always the darkest just before daylight." Something of this truth was seen one week in Milton. Letters came from Mr. Courtenay, handed by Capt. Henly, of the ship "Galatea," about the middle of January. He announced his ship was in the Thames, with a pilot bound to London, where she would probably be about five weeks, fitting for her homeward passage; at the end of which time, he should stop in Gravesend to take his passengers, when Mrs. Courtenay and family must be ready to go on board. No one had, until this gentleman's appearance, realized, in full force, that a separation was indeed at hand. Mrs. Harcourt's grief was severe: there was no outpourings of lamentation; but in her pale face and

quiet demeanor was exhibited a holy submission to the will of "Him who doeth all things well."

The shock to Edith was very great. Her heart was too full to give utterance to her feelings in speech. She resolutely exercised all the discipline of which her strong mind was capable. The ring, talismanic as she had believed it, had little power *now* to allay her grief as she thought of leaving England. But she lifted up her voice in prayer for firmness to bear all before her ; and the firmness was given. In a few days, she saw Arthur again ; for his mind was too unsettled for much study. He came unexpectedly, with a request to Edith, from his father and Mrs. Leslie, to go for one or two days to Glendale. She was delighted at this evidence of pleasant feeling, and hastened her little preparations.

Arthur drove her in a chaise ; and, just as they reached the rustic bridge, he took from his coat-pocket a small case, which, on opening, she saw contained a beautiful miniature of himself, and one of his soft brown curls. She turned pale, then deep crimson. Her chest heaved with the fulness of her emotion ; and, in a tumult of feeling she could not restrain, she pressed her lips on the insensible resemblance of her betrothed. He laughed at her enthusiasm, as he called it, but soothed her into composure by his gentle and respectful tenderness, saying, —

"Edith, dearest ! the hour of our separation is approaching. You must sit for your picture too,

and give me a jetty ringlet. I will send the same artist to you next week."

By this time they had reached the house. She alighted from the chaise, and was soon in Mary's embrace, and then conducted to the parlor. Mr. and Mrs. Leslie rose to receive her. Mr. Leslie presented her to his wife, saying, "Allow me to introduce to you my son's future wife, — my daughter. Edith, my dear, as such I have sent for you, — as such I acknowledge you."

"Father! my dear father!" exclaimed Arthur, "how can I sufficiently thank you for this fulfilment of my wishes, my hopes?" He could say no more: his words died on his lips. Such unexpected happiness was more than his firmness could support. He turned to a window; while Mr. Leslie, imprinting a kiss on Edith's brow, placed her between himself and his wife, on a sofa. What a revulsion of feeling for all! — the acknowledged affianced of Arthur! Edith seemed to be lightened of half her anxieties; the future, in one moment, all brightness.

The day had passed swiftly and cheerfully to all at Glendale. Mr. Leslie had laid aside his reserve and dignified coldness, and Mrs. Leslie appeared desirous to please.

When the hour of retiring arrived, the two young friends went to Mary's apartment, where a blazing fire in the grate cast a ruddy glow over the furniture, lighting it up so brightly, that they seated themselves as if for a long conversation. Edith,

while looking round the comfortable chamber, contrasted the state-room of a merchant-ship : its narrow limits and sundry inconveniences rose like a spectre before her vivid imagination ; but, unwilling to cloud her friend's mind, she turned her eyes to the wall, saying, " How glad I am your mamma's picture is here ! A daughter's apartment seems the holiest spot for it. How I wish I had a portrait of either or both my parents ! But I have something so valuable, Mary, I ought to be contented." And she exhibited the beautiful miniature of Arthur, — that classical head, the noble features, and rich brown curls, so like, and so exquisitely painted. They both looked at it so long and intently, that Mary at last said, laughingly, " Edith, the candles and your bright eyes together will fade the colors : do shut it up ! "

Edith inquired why Mr. Leslie had so suddenly changed his deportment to her. Why did he call her his future daughter, &c. ? Mary smiled, and then said, " Has not Arthur told you his adventure with the dog ? "

" No," replied Edith ; " nor do I know to what you allude."

Mary then informed her, that, for several days during the past week, one of Arthur's dogs had appeared restless and uneasy, refusing at intervals to drink, and at times uttering low growls, as if in pain. He was ordered to be secured in his kennel, until some more decided evidence of hydrophobia appeared.

"On Wednesday morning, Arthur took his gun, and went into the woods in search of game. While he was sauntering along, he was suddenly startled by loud cries. He glanced in the direction of the bridge, then towards the woods, uncertain from whence the sound proceeded. The cries were renewed. He sprang forward, and, through the opening in the shrubbery, beheld Mrs. Leslie, running with the speed of lightning, pursued by the dog, whose eyes glared wildly, and who was evidently in the act of springing at his victim.

"With the presence of mind which characterizes every action, Arthur," she continued, "said in gentle tones, 'Leo! Leo!' The infuriated animal paused. Not a moment was to be lost. Arthur levelled his gun, — his aim was unerring, — and Leo instantly fell dead. Mrs. Leslie shrieked frantically, unconscious, as she afterwards said, of my brother's presence, until she heard the report of the gun. The dog was so near her, that there was a fearful chance of her being shot. She was completely exhausted by terror and the rapidity of her flight. Arthur was very affectionately attentive to her. He took off his coat, and, placing it on the turf, seated her, while he went to the little waterfall we have so often admired, brought water in his hunting-cap, bathed her temples and hands until she was sufficiently calm to be able to reach the house. Her gratitude was expressed in the warmest terms for Arthur's prompt and heroic preservation of her from the dog, about

whose madness there could be no doubt, as he must have snapped his chain in a paroxysm, and fled towards the woods, probably in pursuit of his master. Mrs. Leslie considers Arthur's sudden appearance as Heaven-directed ; for she felt her strength yielding to the agitation of her mind, and thought, in one minute more, she must have fallen to the earth.

"You may naturally suppose, dear Edith, we were all very happy in the safety of Mrs. Leslie. I think Arthur risked much in doing as he did. Had he been a less experienced marksman, he had wounded, if not killed her ; for Leo touched her dress with his fore-paws."

Edith was much excited by this narration, and longed to go down stairs to express to both her friends her congratulations : but Mary advised her against it, as Mrs. Leslie had requested the affair might not be mentioned ; for her nerves had not wholly recovered from the shock.

"And now, Edith, I must go on to say, that I think this incident has increased in my father, in a tenfold degree, the value of Arthur. He has noticed, for some time, the anxious look my brother has worn ; and, though there has been no diminution of respectful tenderness in his manner towards his father, a superficial observer must have noticed the constraint of all his actions ; and, since we have learned your decision to accompany Mrs. Courtenay to the United States, we have all discussed the disinterestedness of your conduct.

"I have no doubt my father now views Arthur's attachment to you as something more than a *boyish fancy*, and that he planned with Mrs. Leslie the scene of to-day ; in addition to which, the good sense and gentlemanly respect Arthur exhibited in his deportment towards his step-mother, on his introduction, softened his father's heart : for," she continued, "when he entered the house, though looking very pale, he advanced affectionately towards her, and, taking one of her hands in both of his, clasped it very cordially, and, kissing it, said, 'I know, madam, you will do all for the happiness of my father and his family, that, as rational beings, we have any right to expect.' She seemed touched by his manner, so different from mine, and made a very gracious reply. Then Arthur handed her into the dining-room, — led her to my seat at the head of the table. I know how hard he tried to appear calm. The tears were in my eyes. Since that day's ordeal, every thing has gone very smoothly. I have very little care. Mrs. Leslie does not interfere with my pursuits ; and, were it not for the dread of her fashionable London friends, I should be satisfied. But I know she will fill the house with company very soon ; for she already calls it dull here."

"Oh," said Edith, "how happy every one ought to be here ! I know *you*, dear Mary, will be happy with Matilda and Arthur. Will you not, by every attention, be to him what *I* so gladly would be ? He will feel my absence."

"Yes," replied Mary : " I will exert myself to the utmost for his sake, your sake, Edith ; and, but for that hateful voyage to America, you might be happy also."

"Do not call any thing *hateful* when *duty* points the way. Let what may occur, I shall never have a regret : indeed, I can bear any thing, under the conviction that I act from a sense of right. There are melancholy scenes before me, I doubt not ; they may require struggles to maintain my fortitude : but, Mary, I *shall* preserve it ; because I *shall*, I *do* already, ask it, where no petition is refused. Good-night, dearest !" And the friends separated.

Edith's mind had been so agitated by the various events of the last few hours, she slept but little. The night was one of unusual stillness : not a sound disturbed the tranquillity ; even Leo's voice was now hushed in a long, long sleep. She watched the first streak of rosy light in the eastern horizon with such confusion in her head as hardly to realize whether she was not already at sea. The sun soon began to brighten the sky ; when she hastily dressed, and awaited the summons to breakfast, as an incident to break in upon the tedium of many sleepless hours.

Soon after breakfast, she begged Mrs. Leslie to receive her congratulations on having escaped unharmed from a painful scene, "the details of which," she said, "Mary had given her the previous evening. I am sure, my dear madam, you will forgive me for not obeying your wishes for silence on this affair ; and may I not hope this act of Arthur's will

endear him to you, and add one more link to the chain which must bind him to you? He is so disinterested, so wholly forgetful of self, when he can serve another!"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Leslie: "I cannot feel too much for this exemplary young man; and there may be another link, — one for your sweet self, dear Edith. What shall I say to her who is ready to resign so much of her happiness to accompany her mother to a foreign land?"

"Say of her, that the mother deserves all, and more than all, the adopted child can do for her; for whatever good there may be in her she owes to that mother's tender care and beautiful example."

As there were yet many things to be accomplished, Edith returned early to Mrs. Harcourt's. She took leave of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie. Mary she was to see again, and probably Matilda. Her heart was lightened of much of its grief since Mr. Leslie had acknowledged her as Arthur's future wife. His former treatment had affected her feelings very deeply, though she had never complained. She was glad this cloud had swept by, leaving glimpses of the "blue serene" beyond.

On the way to Milton, Edith asked Arthur why he had not informed her of the adventure with the dog.

"Because," he replied, "Mrs. Leslie requested to have as little as possible said about it. I took it for granted, Mary would tell you; and, above all, I do

not like to be the hero of my own story. The affair was so sudden, the death of poor Leo so instantaneous, I hardly remember with any degree of distinctness what did happen. I only know I was terrified lest the dog should spring on Mrs. Leslie ; in which case, I should not have dared to fire, there were so many chances of my shooting her. In almost an agony of feeling, I pulled the trigger ; and, when I found *she* was safe, I thanked God most fervently that I had been spared the awful responsibility involved by taking aim with so little deliberation."

The artist came to take Edith's miniature, which proved as successful as Arthur's. She had determined upon the manner of settling the pecuniary part. She had sold her paintings in London, and, if not for their full value, had been so far remunerated as to enable her to arrange this little matter. Accordingly, she insisted on doing it ; and, when sent to her lover, she told him it was *now* her gift, which it could not otherwise have been. He knew not, until a long time afterwards, how the affair was adjusted.

A letter soon arrived from Capt. Henly, announcing the 28th of February as his appointed day for sailing. The ship, he wrote, "would be down the Thames on the morning of that day, when he hoped all would be in readiness." There were but few days to intervene. It would be useless to attempt describing the feelings of Mrs. Courtenay, Mrs. Harcourt, or the younger members of the family : a veil

must be thrown over them. Mary Leslie and Matilda said farewell, with many tears, sobs, and with reserved promises of writing often.

The morning of the 28th dawned amid clouds and a drizzly rain ; but, as the wind was fair, the captain determined to sail. Arthur had arrived in Milton on the 27th, and had passed the day chiefly in Edith's society, using every effort to cheer her drooping spirits.

She arose on the sad morning with an intolerable weight at her heart, which none can describe, though all may imagine.

The breakfast was untasted, even by the children ; for Margaret Granville exercised very little control over her feelings, and her sorrow very naturally affected them.

Mrs. Harcourt and Mrs. Courtenay were pale and silent. We will not invade the sacredness of their parting interview : they hardly hoped to meet again on earth.

Edith left the breakfast-room, and went to the parlor, where, folding her arms on the table, and laying her head upon them, she gave way to an uncontrollable burst of grief. The sorrow-stricken girl had exercised all the firmness she possessed, even to the present moment. Nature demanded relief, and she yielded to her feelings. Arthur entered the room, with a countenance deadly pale, but with a firm step. He approached her with great tenderness. "Edith!" he said, in a voice hollow and tremulous

from emotion, "Edith, dearest! speak to me, and try to command yourself, or I shall feel I have not done my duty in allowing you to go to America."

He bent one knee on the ground, and, gently raising her head from the table, supported it on his shoulder. He bowed his face, reverently it may be said, over her glossy ringlets, as they fell on his breast, and clasped her fondly in his arms. Tears of bitterness, of intense suffering, were on the drooping head. Never, until this moment, had he realized how dear she was to him. Superior to all romantic display of attachment, exhibited in the hackneyed expressions of "never-dying love," "eternal constancy," his soul was in his words as he whispered, "Edith! you are mine, by every sacred feeling, by the approval of friends, by the sanction of Heaven. Distance, absence, separation, will affect no change, except to strengthen our ties. You go in the strict performance of duty: there seemed no other path for you. I will cheerfully resign you until the time when I can claim you as my wife. I will hasten that time by devotion to my studies, and exertions to gain a suitable maintenance for you."

She raised her dark eyes to his face, and saying, solemnly, "I will strive to prove myself worthy of your affection, of *you*," rose from her seat, and commenced preparations for going on board. He threw her cloak over her, started as the captain's voice in the hall sounded "Trunks all on board!" and, placing her arm in his, they entered the room to take

leave of Mrs. Harcourt and Margaret. Jenny and the two girls were already in the hall.

Why prolong the scene? The carriage was waiting to convey them to Gravesend, about a mile, where they were to embark.

Notwithstanding the rain, a number of the poorer class of people had assembled on the quay to catch a parting glance of their benevolent friends. The boat was waiting: all stepped on board, and, in a few minutes, were alongside the "Galatea." The clouds had partially cleared, and glimpses of sunlight were occasionally seen. The deck of the ship was so slippery and wet as hardly to allow foothold.

The moment had arrived for the passengers' friends to go on shore. Arthur was the last to leave. He stood in the stern, his head uncovered: the faint glimmer of sunlight played around his hair, as the curls stirred in the breeze; and, as the ship swung round with the ebb tide, he waved his hat, till he was soon too near the shore to be recognized.

Slowly the ship's topsails were hoisted, and sheeted home; the windlass was manned; and, simultaneous with the "Heave yo! heave, heave, men!" of the sailors, the heavy flapping of the sails, and the rattling of ropes, was heard the rough voice of the pilot, "Run up the jibs there!" In a moment, the unchained vessel was seen moving along on her course.

Unaccustomed to such sounds, and to so much confusion, poor Mrs. Courtenay was half-stunned; and turning with tearful eyes towards Tilbury Fort,

for a long, last look, she, with her family, prepared to go below. All who have been at sea, who have left home, kindred, friends, can realize what a solemn hour it was. No one spoke. Articulation was denied Edith : she tried to utter a few words to her mother ; but they died on her lips. She kept her eyes fixed on the retreating shore until they were so blinded by tears, all was misty and shadowy as the destiny before her. They passed down the gangway into the cabin.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Adieu! adieu! My native land
Fades o'er the waters blue:
The night-wind sighs, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun, that sets upon the sea,
We follow in his flight:
Farewell, awhile, to him and thee.
My native land, 'Good-night!'"

THEY were on the sea, — the lonely wife, with her children; the noble girl, whose self-sacrificing and grateful nature had led her to resign the dearest object of her affections, and traverse an ocean to a foreign land, that she might cheer and comfort her adopted parent in her hours of adversity and trial. Her well-balanced mind had never shrunk from duty; and, calling into action all the energies of her character, she committed herself to "Him who spreadeth out the heavens, and ruleth the raging of the sea;" then calmly took her mother's hand, and, passing it under her arm, conducted her to her state-room, and, ere the pilot left, had written a few lines to Arthur and Mrs. Harcourt, assuring them all were well, and as cheerful as they could be after the trying scenes of the morning.

There were but few passengers, and those not very interesting people. Of course, no great demands were made upon our little party for their sakes.

Twenty days passed on, as days usually do at sea, in vain efforts to be happy in the midst of noise, — that longing for *rest*, if only for one hour ; for a pause from the ceaseless motion of the ship ; the alternate rolling, pitching, heaving ; and, at times, seeming to flounder among the waves.

Many discomforts attended the passage, which were hard to be endured. At one time, serious fears of a mutiny, so strong a feeling of disaffection, appeared among the sailors ; at another, a heavy sea was shipped, which swept from the deck much of the live-stock, and came dashing into the cabin : one of the deadlights was knocked in by it ; and, for some time, the second mate and the steward were unable to fit in another, to keep out the tumultuous waves. The little girls, however, enjoyed much in fine weather. They walked, with their mother and Edith, on the quarter-deck ; sat on the hen-coops, to talk with the poultry, or, leaning over the taff-rail, watched the waves or the dolphins : the latter they often saw on the “Banks.” Among the few pleasant scenes on shipboard, was the sight of the full moon, as it rose, one evening, from the sea. It was the first time Edith had seen so grand and beautiful a scene. She was perfectly delighted, and stood leaning over the ship’s side, gazing with holy admi-

ration on the full orb which slowly appeared from the depths of ocean. Silent and awe-struck at the splendor of the view, she watched the long line of light, the sea spreading out in every direction, boundless in extent, and almost as smooth as a mirror; a few little waves quietly dashing the ship's sides as she gently sped on her way. The sailors were lounging on the deck, in the evening-watch; the helmsman was whistling the air of "Black-eyed Susan;" while the chief officer paced the quarter-deck, puffing his cigar. The tranquillity, so perfectly in unison with Edith's feelings, was most soothing. Her thoughts were beyond the sea: her lips murmured the name of Arthur, but in tones too low to reach any human ear. She turned her eyes from the ocean to the star-spangled heavens, and felt *there* she was heard, *there* her petitions for his happiness were registered. Her meditations were interrupted by the sudden appearance of the captain, who good-humoredly said, "Miss Dacres, you are just the one to go to sea, — no sickness, and so pleased always to look about and enjoy every thing."

"I do enjoy some few things; and, if Mr. Courtenay were only here, I should be much more happy: but poor mamma is so sad without him!"

"Well," replied the kind-hearted man, "in a fortnight, I hope, you will all be together." "All?" Edith internally murmured. "All? No, not *all*!" She found the night-air was becoming too cold; and, at that moment, Jenny's voice sounded from the

gangway, "Miss Edith, your mamma fears you are imprudent, and will take cold: she begs you to come below."

The next morning, a beautiful ship was seen in the distance. The wind was very fresh, — what sailors call a stiff breeze. In a short time, however, the captain of the "Galatea" was able to speak her; learned she was from Boston, bound to Dublin; but did not think the name of his ship could be heard. Signals were exchanged: they passed on.

What had been Mrs. Courtenay's feelings had she known her husband and son were passengers in that ship? — that, at the very time her eyes were gazing on her, as she swiftly "winged her way," his own, and those of her son, were unconsciously directed towards the same object, which contained all that was dear to him in the universe? They were mercifully spared an aggravation of feeling which it would have required almost superhuman fortitude to have borne. Not to have met for so long a time, and to have passed each other on the ocean! Too, too sad!

The day of the 7th of April closed with heavy clouds. The wind roared in the rigging, — a dismally prophetic sound. The captain made all preparation for an approaching storm: he frequently entered the cabin, announcing the state of the weather, evidently trying to maintain his cheerfulness. As night approached, the wind blew violently, as

might be well understood, by those below, from the rolling of the ship, and the tumult on deck.

The first hours of the night dragged wearily on. Mrs. Courtenay refused to go to her berth; and Edith, with devoted tenderness, remained by her side, watching every change in her face, and making all efforts in her power to keep up her spirits.

The weather had been hazy for many days; and no observation had, of course, been taken: but Capt. Henly thought he had seen Boston Light the evening of the 6th, at a time when the mist had partially cleared. Then, as the wind increased, he stood out to sea, dreading any attempt to run in with a sky so threatening. By daylight, on the 8th, the snow fell thick and fast. The ship was lying-to, under close-reefed topsails, but drifting, two miles an hour, no one knew whither. The danger was of Scituate Rocks or Nantasket Beach.

About eight o'clock, A.M., Edith entered the children's state-room, urging them to remain quietly in their berths, as they would find it difficult to stand. She reported them to their mother as wholly unconscious of danger.

The storm soon became appalling. The howling of the wind; the straining of the masts; the roaring of the sea, as it lashed the ship's sides or dashed over the bulwarks, — were terrific.

Mrs. Courtenay and Jenny tried to steady themselves by grasping a settee securely stanchioned; the former, her countenance ghastly pale, looking

eagerly towards Capt. Henly, as he stood for a minute before the grate, warming his hands, and shaking the snow from his cap.

Edith had preserved her presence of mind, remembering all that was required of her ; but now, startled by the expression of the captain's face, she inquired, " What is the matter ? Are we in danger of shipwreck, and so near our port ? " — " There is always danger," he answered, " in a snow-storm on this coast ; but I think we shall weather the gale."

At that moment, the chief mate's voice was heard in the companion-way, calling, " Captain ! " " Ay, ay ! " And, in a second, he was on deck.

Another moment, and a heavy sea struck the ship, and came running down the gangway into the cabin, rolling and surging over trunks and other things in the way. The commotion was fearful. All were bewildered by this unexpected rush of water. The passengers were dashed against the berths, or sent, staggering, on to the settees, &c. The worst was over. The storm appeared to lull, at intervals, long enough to allow the passengers to speak to each other. A melancholy group did the cabin present. A French lady put her head out of the door of her stateroom, inquiring, " Quel temps fait il aujourd'hui ? " Caroline and Marion had just entered the cabin. The former answered, as she shivered before the grate, " Il a beaucoup neigé la nuit passée, il faut un vent bien froid."

" Mon Dieu ! " said Madame G. ; and the door

was closed. Most fortunately, she little realized the peril. With an impulse not very common now to Edith's character, she wanted to *see* the danger; and, passing up the companion-way, she was horror-struck at the scene before her, — the deck covered with snow; the air filled with it, except where the sudden gusts of wind seemed to separate the flakes, admitting openings for the sea to be visible, and revealing the waves, literally "mountains high." Her emotion was extreme. She stood clinging to the balustrade, gazing upon the fearful sight, her dark hair blown in wild disorder by the gale; and her large eyes, so fearfully distended, lent to her appearance the air of the presiding Genius of the storm. The captain perceived her; and, ere she was prepared or aware of it, he raised her in his arms, and, landing her in the cabin, sternly said, "Stay below, or I shall order the companion-way closed." She had just been missed. The cabin was so dimly lighted, it was hardly possible to tell who was present. She went to her mother, and, kneeling before her, took her hands in hers, and seemed to look to her for comfort in such an hour. The two girls had taken alarm at the gloomy appearance of all around them, and hung round Jenny as if for protection. Jenny had no fears. She had said, repeatedly, she knew all would end well; and, indeed, others began to feel the storm was subsiding, because it did occasionally pause. Thus passed the day, amid the alternations of hope and fear.

Towards evening, the snow ceased. Capt. Henly, with something like a smile upon his face, came to the table for supper. He bade all be of good cheer, saying, —

“I trust to-morrow may see us in a snug berth at Long Wharf. The ‘Galatea’ has borne the gale gallantly. She has lost nothing but a part of the taffrail, when she shipped the heavy sea. As for you, Miss Edith, you are quite a heroine. Who could have expected to see a young lady dare to put her head above the deck in such a storm?”

As the night advanced, Mrs. Courtenay was obliged to go to her state-room. She had borne up nobly while the danger lasted, but was now entirely exhausted. Edith remained by her for some time, and then retired to her own berth, where she fervently thanked God for his mercies, vouchsafed to all, in preserving them amid such imminent peril. About midnight, there was a cry of “Land, ho!” Then came the captain’s happy announcement, that the clouds were breaking, the stars appearing, and the wind north-west. From state-room to state-room echoed the glad tidings. All wished each other joy. No one seemed to remember aught had occurred to mar their happiness during the passage. A feeling of deep sympathy united the passengers in one common bond of union.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Bright flag at yonder tapering mast!
Fling out your field of azure blue;
Let 'star and stripe' be westward cast,
And fly as Freedom's eagle flew."

IN the morning, how changed was the scene! Gloom had disappeared from every face, and bright smiles taken its place. The two girls rushed to their mother's embrace; and, as she kissed their glowing cheeks, they exclaimed, "Papa will give us the next kiss!" Edith shared their happiness; for she, too, longed to see Mr. Courtenay. And as to her mother, she seemed wholly changed: her eyes looked bright, as if sorrow had never dimmed them; and, when dressed to go on shore, Edith thought she had never seen her look more lovely. The "Galatea" sailed proudly among the beautiful islands of Boston Harbor, some of which were partially covered by the recent snow; while spots of green, appearing in striking contrast, gave great interest to the scene. The passengers all seemed delighted with the uncommon beauty of these islands and the forts. When the pilot came on board, there was a feeling

of disappointment that Mr. Courtenay was not with him. As the ship had had a passage of six weeks, of course much anxiety must have been felt for her in the storm ; and his family were almost sure he would not lose one moment of his happiness in knowing they were safe. But the pilot appeared not to know any thing of him.

Capt. Henly told Edith he would inquire of the newspaper-editors, when they came on board, as the persons most likely to give the desired information. In a short time, he communicated to her the overwhelming intelligence that "Mr. Courtenay had sailed for Ireland three weeks before"! She was perfectly thunderstruck. What was to be done? How could she break this unexpected and painful news to her mother? But it must be told, and immediately ; for every moment's delay would but increase her inability to perform the task.

With all possible gentleness, she announced the disappointment of the eager hopes so long indulged, — hopes which had buoyed the family up in danger, even in dismay, during the recent storm. Mrs. Courtenay struggled against her adverse fate with the firmness which marked her character ; but, when Edith urged her to retire to her state-room until she could talk again with the captain, she endeavored to rise, and, in the effort, fell senseless into Edith's arms. She was supported by her faithful young friend and Jenny to a settee, where they applied restoratives. For some time, she continued insensi-

ble. Edith became alarmed ; but life gradually returned. Her lips quivered convulsively ; the color came back to her cheeks ; and, on opening her eyes, she asked, " Where is my husband ? "

Edith repeated what she had already told her, but with this addition, that there were several gentlemen on board, friends of Mr. Courtenay, who could probably throw some light on the affair. From them she learned, that, by one of those vicissitudes in mercantile life which frequently occur, Mr. Courtenay had been called upon to settle some business in Ireland, in which his presence was very highly important. He immediately wrote his wife not to embark in the " Galatea ; " explained to Capt. Henly the alteration in his plans. Mrs. Courtenay was to go to Holyhead, where her husband would meet her and the family, and all return to the United States in the ship which conveyed him out. The vessel which carried these letters had not reached England when the " Galatea " sailed : her passage had been unusually long, it was presumed. Mr. Courtenay was expected to return by the 1st of June. He had left letters with an intimate friend, to be delivered to his wife, if it should unfortunately occur that she had left England ere she heard from him. He had endeavored to guard against all additional anxiety to what she must have already endured in their long separation ; but his precautions had been in vain, as the event proved.

The disappointment was indeed dreadful ; but

Edith now felt the importance of having followed out the path of duty, and above all did she feel the approbation of her own heart in the sacrifice she had made. What had been Mrs. Courtenay's situation without her ? The children were still too young to be able to cheer or support their mother's drooping spirits ; while Edith's efficient and resolute character made her equal to any emergency.

The family found many friends, who kindly urged them to be their guests until they could find a permanent home ; but Mrs. Courtenay felt it was too great a tax upon any one's hospitality, and went to a private boarding-house, until she could subdue her feelings into something like tranquillity. In the midst of disappointed expectations, there was no forgetfulness of the disastrous fate they had escaped. The pilot had been heard to say, " Had not the wind chopped round north-west as it did, probably not one had been left to tell the tale of suffering on board." Of course, Mrs. Courtenay was deeply grateful that they had been spared. She spoke to the children, with reverential gratitude, of the mercies vouchsafed them, and was soon able to hold out the hope of a re-union with their father and brother.

Not long after the arrival of the " Galatea," a package was received from Mrs. Harcourt, forwarding the letters from Mr. Courtenay, which arrived the very next day after the ship sailed. She had learned the change of plans, and was exceedingly grieved at the delay of these letters. " Of course,"

she wrote, "nothing could be done. My disappointment and grief have been great at the trial which awaited you on your arrival. I daily offer my prayers for you and the dear ones around you. I trust, ere this reaches Boston, you will be safely on shore," &c. Edith, too, was happy in receiving long letters from Arthur: so cheering were they to her heart, that she already began to feel bright and hopeful.

The spring was very backward: no signs of vegetation, except a few green spots in the fronts of houses. The young people were struck with the barren appearance of all around; for, on leaving England, the fields were green, the early peas quite high out of the ground, &c.

Marion, who was a very observing child, with very quick perceptions, inquired of Jenny where the Indians were. Poor Jenny's brain was racked for a reply, but at length said, "Why, they are all gone west, I believe. I have heard of their going towards the setting sun; but your mamma says they once lived where all these brick houses now stand: this place was once a forest." The little girl, at times, seemed to feel a strong interest in the colored people. She had never seen one until she came to Boston, and, as she met them in the streets, would whisper to Jenny, "How like satin their faces are,—so glossy! and what beautiful white teeth they have! I know they are kind to little girls; for mamma says they love children very

much, and are always gentle towards them. *You* are not *always* gentle, you know, Jenny, when I tear my frocks, are you?" Jenny answered quickly, —

"Well, if I am not, I love you, Miss Marion. Sometimes you are careless, and make me a great deal of work. I can't be good-natured then; and I don't believe a colored woman would, though you do think them so gentle."

Marion said no more.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee:
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me.”

A HOUSE was found, belonging to a friend of Mr. Courtenay, which seemed exactly in accordance with Mrs. Courtenay's wishes. It was delightfully situated, in the neighborhood of Boston, near the sea, commanding delightful views, and sheltered from the north winds by a hill at the back. Edith's taste assisted in the purchase of very plain furniture. She saved her mother all the labor and care she possibly could; and, in less than a month after their arrival, they were comfortably settled at D——, and the two girls at the academy, as day-scholars.

The neighbors were kindly attentive; for Mrs. Courtenay made her house a very attractive spot. It always presented a scene of cheerfulness; and she was uniformly so graceful and elegant, none could

see her but to admire. Edith's loveliness, too, was now of no common character. She was almost seventeen, and so regal in her movements as to arrest attention wherever she appeared. The voyage had restored the rich bloom to her cheek ; and vivacity now sparkled in her beautiful black eyes. She was no heroine of romance, to sit and sigh incessantly at the separation from her lover. She dwelt upon his valuable traits of character, his deep love for her, all she owed him for his beautiful example, but in a very rational manner ; and Hope whispered they should meet again, never to part on earth. She had duties to perform in the cultivation of her intellectual powers ; her drawing and music occupied a portion of every day ; and time passed so rapidly, that she almost wondered as she saw the buds opening, the fields looking so green, and the hepatica and anemone in bloom.

On the 3d of June came the glad tidings of Mr. Courtenay's arrival off Boston Light. In less than twelve hours, he was with his family.

Never was joy equal to theirs. He was restored to them in good health ; and Edward so grown, so manly, it seemed hardly possible to realize the changes which had taken place. All anxieties were over. Edith was the only one not *perfectly* happy : how could she be ? But she rejoiced greatly in seeing her mother so delighted. She strove to subdue regret that she was three thousand miles from England and from Arthur.

The hours flew swiftly during a summer of unequalled joy. The very trees and flowers seemed to look bright as in "merrie England." There were no primroses, cowslips, or jasmines ; but there were fragrant roses, scarlet geraniums, flourishing in the garden, which had been cultivated for Mr. Courtenay's especial admiration. Edith had letters by every arrival, containing all home-news. Among other things, she learned "Mrs. Leslie had crowded Glendale with company, fashionable friends from London, who had made a complete overturn of all their old habits. There were continual parties, riding, driving, boating, &c. : no hours for thought, no places for retirement. My poor father looks worn out by this incessant confusion : he is much changed. How different, dear Edith, from those rational and tranquil pleasures we remember, — those quiet scenes in the library, the cheerful horseback-rides, the strolls in the woods ! Mary sighs : but I should not wonder if she yet *smiled* ; for there is a certain Sir George Thornton, who seems to find more pleasure in her society than in the gayety of his cousin's (Mrs. Leslie) house. But *entre nous*.

"My collegiate studies will be completed at Christmas ; and then I shall decide on my profession, which I think will be the ministry. You will make so good a clergyman's wife, I think you are exactly fitted for it.

"When we meet, how soon we shall forget this sad separation ! Remember, Edith, I am to be imme-

diately informed of any change in Mr. Courtenay's plans for his family. I am already growing impatient to hear if there is any hope of your return to England."

There was no prospect of it yet, as she felt her position was just such as to make it proper for her to remain where she was until some definite arrangement of Mr. Courtenay's business should settle the home of his family either in the United States or England. She could not always suppress her feelings; and a tear would occasionally fall on the miniature or the ring, as she turned to them for a stimulus to greater effort: the talismanic power of the latter was often felt. She had promised Arthur to try to be cheerful; and she scrupulously performed her promise. She was becoming quite interested in her new home. She liked the frank, independent spirit of the Americans; rejoiced to see so little poverty and wretchedness among the lower ranks. "Every rood of ground maintained its man." All seemed cheerful and contented: every laborer was apparently satisfied with his wages; returned from his day's work to a comfortable home, a clean hearth, tidy wife and children, good, wholesome meals; and there was a certain self-reliance she had not always seen in her native land, — a land which she fondly loved, and of which she was justly proud, even when she deplored the state of things —

"Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

Edith often walked with Caroline and Marion down to the seaside; and, while they looked for pebbles and seaweeds, she would sit on one of the bold projections of rock often jutting out at sea, and let her fancy travel to Glendale, to dear Mary and Matilda, then to the student at Cambridge; and as the waves gently laved the beach, and broke in low murmurs at her feet, she would again and again breathe forth the name of Arthur! Arthur! Might not the western breeze have wafted that sound across the Atlantic? for has not the inquiry been made, "Who can trace the orbit of a word?" She was occasionally adventurous enough to go to the beach in cloudy and gloomy mornings to watch the ocean when its dark waves came rolling in, with foamy, crested tops, until they dashed against the rocks, and rolled heavily back to the mighty deep, to bear proud navies on its bosom,—ay, and perhaps to engulf some devoted ship and its helpless crew. She often recalled the scene at Margate, when she was with the children in the sudden storm, and turned with a shudder from the memory of what she then suffered. Her long walks, and disregard of weather, astonished the female inhabitants of D——, who seldom roamed abroad unless in bright sunshine; but her gentle manners and dignified carriage soon made her a general favorite. The good-natured salutation given by an honest farmer always received a courteous answer; and the children of the village had learned to love her so well, that they continually

brought her bunches of wild flowers, tastefully arranged, which she delighted to copy. Her chamber was seldom without these treasures of the woods and fields. Her sanctum, as she called it, was fitted up at her own expense, and with that union of simplicity and taste which speaks of true refinement of mind. Her little property was, in the United States, ample for all her personal requirements, and allowed her the privilege of finding many comforts for the sick. Her benevolence, indeed, extended to all within her influence ; and her mother often smilingly said, "You are becoming a 'Man of Ross.' How is it, my dear Edith, your small income holds out to such an extent?"

"Because, mamma, you brought me up ; and I try to be a *little* like you. I can remember so many instances of your benevolent kindness to the poor and suffering, in Milton, that my humble donations appear as nothing in comparison. All I can hope is the *spirit* in which they are bestowed will be received by Him who looks into the hearts of his children."

About the middle of August, a gentleman by the name of Henderson came to Mr. Courtenay's, with credentials from a merchant in Smyrna, and other letters from Mr. Granville in Malta. He was young, accomplished, and exceedingly gentleman-like in his deportment ; of course, quite a valuable addition to Mr. Courtenay's family. He remained with them several weeks, as the friends from whom he brought letters were anxious every attention should be shown

him ; and Mr. Courtenay made great efforts to render his house a pleasant home for him during his visit.

Mr. Henderson saw a great deal in Edith to respect and admire. He seemed to derive extreme pleasure from her society, — aiding her in her drawing, or accompanying her with his flute when she practised on the piano. Their conversation was often of a very intellectual character, and well calculated to develop the powers of Edith's mind. It was impossible not to be pleased with the society of so intelligent and cultivated a person ; but, while Edith was gratified by Mr. Henderson's attentions, she never for a moment swerved from her allegiance to Arthur, to whom she wrote the whole history of their acquaintance, their subjects of conversation, &c. But the greatest attraction in Mr. Henderson's familiar discourse were his descriptions of a brief residence in India, where he had formed delightful acquaintances and some friendships, which he hoped yet to renew in Europe. He spoke with particular eloquence of a Mr. and Mrs. Talbot, from England, "around whose society," he said, "there hovered such a charm, that he spent his happiest hours with them. Mrs. Talbot was an invalid, her health having suffered from the climate. At times, she was very brilliant in conversation, and as often extremely dejected. There seemed to be a sorrow at her heart, even while her husband, by every delicate attention, tried to cheer her. Her anxiety for letters from England was intense ; but she never named from whom she

received them. Usually, after an arrival, she was more cheerful ; and then," observed Mr. Henderson, "appeared the true beauty of her intellect. She gave utterance to sentiments so noble, so frank and warm-hearted, that, but for the fact of her being the wife of my friend, I should have found it difficult to have resisted the power of her fascinations. She frequently reverted to her early life, particularly her school-days ; dwelt with great affection on her remembrance of a lovely girl, who, while at school, had exercised great influence over her. Whenever she spoke of her, her whole heart seemed in the subject ; but she refused to say where she had been educated, or even to name her young friend. She was very mysterious in many ways."

"You have awakened such an interest in me," said Edith, one day, "that I really long to see this lady. Shall I not charge a little to your vivid imagination ?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Henderson. "She is actually what I represent her : but, remember, I never said I thought her faultless ; for I know she is *not* : she is, at times, very wayward, and, I think, occasionally exercises too much power over Talbot, who is a noble fellow, and worthy all her affection. I wish, Miss Dacres, she were exactly like you."

Edith changed the conversation ; for she was very reluctant to have any comparisons made, even to her advantage. Mr. Henderson's deportment was always marked by great delicacy ; but, of late, there

had been more of tenderness than was desirable ; and, to check at once all progress towards attachment, Mr. Courtenay informed him of Edith's engagement, and her strong affection for Mr. Leslie.

From the period of the announcement, his conduct exhibited more than its accustomed respect. He seemed sad, but never made any allusion to Arthur, until the morning he left D——, when, taking Edith's hand as he bade farewell, he said, "Miss Dacres, I hope we shall meet again, even if this hand should be another's."

"My kind wishes will attend you, Mr. Henderson. For all the pleasure and improvement I have derived from your society, I thank you ; and Mr. Leslie will feel equally gratified."

Mr. Henderson's departure left a void in the family-circle of the Courtenays. Living, as they did, in retirement, it was most natural so elegant a man should have made a very pleasant impression. For a day or two, Edith's drawing was full of faults ; her music was less animated. She missed the stimulus to exertion her new friend had given by his judicious praise ; but, above all, she regretted not having inquired further concerning Mrs. Talbot, about whom there hovered such a charm. Now it was too late : she should, in all probability, never see Mr. Henderson again. He was to visit the Southern States, and then return to Smyrna. The lovely Mrs. Talbot would, in time, fade from her memory.

Soon after Mr. Henderson's departure, Edith was

returning from a morning walk, when, in passing a cottage near her home, she observed a man pacing slowly up and down before the door, as if extremely debilitated. He had been noticed by her a day or two previous, but then appeared anxious, as she thought, to escape observation. This morning, however, as she approached him, he paused, and touched his hat, when she recognized the occupant of the cottage. There was something attractive in his pale face and attenuated frame ; and Edith, after courteously returning his salutation, ventured to address him.

“I am sorry, Mr. Hale, to notice your feeble state of health. Have you been long ill ?”

“Yes,” he replied, sorrowfully. “Several weeks since, I had hemorrhage of the lungs ; and it is only within a day or two I have been allowed to take the air. I have seen you pass my windows, Miss Dacres, and have watched your firm step, so different from mine now.” He stopped, as if his feelings were too painful to proceed.

To divert his attention from his illness, Edith said, “How do you amuse your mind while obliged to be so much in the house ?”

He told her he had, until recently, been able to read, his neighbors having kindly lent him books ; but, owing to an affection of his eyes, he had been obliged to relinquish this enjoyment ; “and my wife,” he added, “has too much work to do, to find any time to read to me.”

"How should you like to have me call at your house every day, and read to you for an hour?" inquired the kind-hearted girl.

"*Like it?*" he eagerly replied, as the tears glistened in his eyes, and a light spread over his wan features; "it would make me so happy!"

Edith smiled benevolently, and said, —

"Well, then, I will try the experiment to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock. And now, I will say good-by, as I fear you have already stood too long."

She kept her promise; and, as the morning was chilly with an east wind, she found the invalid less well. He was in his arm-chair, carefully wrapped in a great-coat, as these searching winds, all know, penetrate every part of a house. The room wore an air of extreme neatness, though bearing evidence of very scanty means. In one of the windows were two flower-pots, containing a scarlet geranium and rosebush, both appearing as if carefully tended, and indicating some degree of refinement in the inhabitants of the simple dwelling.

From the side-window was seen a little garden, once gay with flowers, but now almost a wilderness; for the hands which had cultivated it were powerless.

Mr. Hale noticed Edith's look as she turned from the window, and said, despondingly, —

"I once took great pride in my little flower-garden, particularly in raising mignonette, and am trou-

bled by the appearance of neglect it wears. But how can I help it ? ”

She saw the conflict in his mind between repining and submission, and said, gently, —

“ You must not allow yourself to be *troubled* by such things, but hope in time all will be well. Shall I begin to read ? ”

He smiled assent. She took from the table a small Bible, opened it, and, with her clear, musical voice, read the fourteenth chapter of St. John. She made no comments as she closed the sacred volume, but immediately commenced the “ Lady of the Lake,” as he had informed her of his admiration of Scott. She read during the hour, and promised to alternate with poetry, travels, and biography.

With the querulous manner which sometimes attends consumption, Mr. Hale inquired, “ Is it an hour ? ” Edith exhibited her watch, pleased that the time had passed so quickly to the poor invalid, and, promising to return to-morrow, left him.

These visits to Mr. Hale were continued whenever his strength allowed him to listen to Edith’s reading without fatigue ; but there were periods when he was too feeble to sit up or fix his attention. He often revived in the latter part of the day ; and occasionally, in the long twilight of summer evenings, she would pass a half-hour in entertaining him with descriptions of English scenery, English amusements and customs. The invalid enjoyed these accounts exceedingly. Sometimes she would, by

gentle, and to him insensible, transition, direct his mind to objects of higher interest ;

“ Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way ; ”

point out all the benefits resulting from protracted illness, — its lessons of an entire dependence on our heavenly Parent, as well as gratitude to our friends ; the utter unsatisfactoriness of all earthly possessions, when the body is prostrate from illness or racked by suffering. Above all would she urge him to confide his wife and children to Him who had promised to be “ a father to the fatherless, and the widow’s God.” In this way, a girl but eighteen years of age had power to mitigate suffering, pour the balm of consolation into an almost desponding heart, and smooth the passage to the tomb. The invalid often complained of the length of the days ; that the hours dragged so wearily along, particularly as he had no timepiece, and could not hear the village-clock. His wife has mentioned this, and observed she was often obliged to leave the house to ascertain the hour.

When Edith learned this, she determined to lighten another burden. Accordingly, after the close of her reading, she one morning took her watch from her side, and, placing it in a little case of her own manufacture, said playfully, —

“ I do not believe you always know what o’clock it is, Mr. Hale : I shall therefore leave my watch here until I need it, only requiring you to wind it

at noon. You will then know exactly at what time to expect me ; and Jenny shall be as punctual in sending your jelly or broth as you will be looking for them."

The poor man's face brightened almost to radiance with surprise and delight. "How am I ever to thank you for your goodness, Miss Dacres ?"

"By patient and cheerful submission," she said, impressively, "to all your trials. I can do but little for your comfort ; but I feel my efforts are *Heaven-directed*."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Star of Hope! gleam o’er the billow;
Bless the soul that sighs for thee;
Bless the sailor’s lonely pillow,
Far at sea!”

AUTUMN had succeeded to summer. The woods had put on their gorgeous robes of purple and gold, producing feelings of admiration and delighted surprise to the Courtenay family, who had seen only the russet tints of English foliage. Edith’s enthusiastic love of nature was amply gratified: she almost dreaded to have a day pass, as lessening the beauty around her.

The maple, walnut, creeper, blueberry, were all copied, to prove to her friends in England the rich autumn tints so often described by American poets were no dreams of imagination. She spent hours in painting every day, while the leaves remained; and, when the last subject for her pencil had departed, she joined with her mother and the children in anticipating a happy winter. In place of the fogs and heavy rains of England, they heard of intense cold, of tremendous snow-storms, &c. Jenny’s apprehen-

sions were, that they could not live in such a climate, until Mrs. Courtenay told her the accounts to which she had been listening were highly exaggerated, and that, among the numerous English people who resided in the United States, few had felt any serious results from the severity of the winters.

Mr. Courtenay always returned early from Boston, and had promised to read aloud during the long evenings. Then the merry sleigh-bells were to be a great amusement. The cheerful wood-fire, flaming, crackling, and flashing, had an effect so exciting, it would be delightful to gather round it at twilight, or for the girls to dance by its light and Edith's music.

Edward, too, was at home, and always bright and cheerful. He promised them some sleigh-rides. Letters from England would be doubly valuable when the out-of-door enjoyments were curtailed. With so many innocent pleasures in perspective, who could dread storms? All was to be sunshine at *home* ; and the tempest might rage without, and, but for the sailor, would be unheeded.

Edith was in her "sanctum," late in October, giving the finishing touches to a pencil-sketch, when Marion suddenly entered, exclaiming, "Letters, sister! letters from England!"

There was one, in a strange hand, sealed with black ; but, as the other was Arthur's writing, she was not much alarmed. On opening the former, she read as follows : —

"LONDON, September, 18—.

"MISS DACRES, — As executor to the late Mr. Bolton, I hasten to inform you of his death, in the latter part of July, and to announce, that, in his will, he mentions the sum of one thousand pounds, loaned by your father many years ago; which amount, until lately, he has been unable to refund. His particular request was, that this debt, with interest, should be paid to you as soon as possible after his decease. Accordingly, you can have said sum, at any time, by bills of exchange on London, at ten days' sight.

"Very respectfully yours, &c.,

"JOHN STEVENS."

Arthur's letter announced the engagement of Mary to Sir George Thornton; an event very pleasing to all, as Sir George was a man of great moral worth and very handsome fortune. "Mary," he continued, "has quite recovered her smiles; but, I am sorry to say, my father's health is very indifferent: he appears at times quite feeble, and, I think, is losing his interest in the cultivation of his estate, which once so wholly occupied him. Mrs. Leslie is very attentive to him; and I cannot help rejoicing that he has in his wife a woman who is willing to resign her love of company, &c., to devote herself to the care of his health.

"The visitors have departed, and (Mary writes me) the house seems more like the happy home it used to be. There is *one* wanting, dearest Edith, to shed light on it. When I leave Cambridge, I think I shall add to my dear father's happiness, as I shall then be able to walk with him about Glendale, urge his riding," &c.

Edith left her room to announce to her mother the good news of her father's loan being paid. She was full of gratitude for this addition to her property, and knew how feelingly Mrs. Courtenay would sympathize in her happiness. As she entered the parlor, she was shocked to observe her mother in tears, and Mr. Courtenay pacing the room in much apparent agitation. She stepped rapidly towards him : —

“What is the matter, sir? Has any thing happened to distress mamma?”

Mr. Courtenay exerted himself to say, —

“Yes, Edith: I have just announced to my wife the probability of my sailing for Malta immediately, on business for Mr. Granville. He is desirous of going to England, and cannot leave his mercantile affairs unless some one acquainted with the kind of trade in which he is engaged can take his place.

“In a letter, received this morning, he makes me a very advantageous offer of partnership, which, situated as I am, I think I ought to accept. For my family's sake, I feel I must go. I may only be absent a few months. I need not dwell upon the distress it will be to me: the idea of another separation is dreadful. But, Edith, I am doing business to very little profit: my advantages in becoming a partner in Mr. Granville's house will almost insure prosperity. Should I hesitate, then? I am to be established here on my return.”

Edith's courage sunk at this statement: all their cheerful visions for the winter overthrown, and her

mother again to be desolate, and in a foreign land, denied the sympathizing tenderness of Mrs. Harcourt, — her comforter in previous hours of sorrow! She turned from Mr. Courtenay to her mother, unable to endure his look of deep distress; but it was little consolation, as she heard her low sobs, and saw her bowed in affliction too deep for words. She drew her head to her bosom, and, resting it against her beating heart, said, "Mamma! dearest mamma! have courage; for Mr. Courtenay's sake, be calm: you will only add to his anxieties, and make yourself ill. I will do all I can for your happiness: do try to be comforted! The winter will soon be over; and, when spring returns, we shall be together again." But how vain were her words! Her mother seemed insensible to every thing but the one sad truth, — her husband was to leave her. Poor Edith's mind and body ached with the feelings which oppressed her. How was she to support all the anxiety and thought in which she should be involved?

She suddenly remembered a lady in the neighborhood who had been attentive and kind to her mother. She knew her a sensible woman, and felt she might suggest some sources of comfort, which, in her wearied state of feeling, she had not the capability to do.

Mrs. Lester came very promptly, and, by her good sense and strong powers of reasoning, convinced Mrs. Courtenay of the importance of firmness in a case where the advantages seemed so apparent,

that any wife ought to arm herself with sufficient fortitude to bear a separation of a few months. Aided by Edith, she succeeded in restoring her to some degree of calmness ; promised to visit her often during the long winter evenings ; and took Caroline and Marion home with her, to relieve their mother of all care for them during the preparations for Mr. Courtenay's departure.

Of course, Edith's aid was in requisition in the necessary outfit for a voyage, and her visits to Mr. Hale had been occasionally interrupted ; but she made every effort to read at least twenty minutes, assuring him, when Mr. Courtenay had sailed she would make up the time.

"It will be too late then," he said, mournfully.

"We will hope not ; but, should this be the allotment of God's providence, I trust you are willing to submit, in the full assurance that all things are ordered in Infinite Wisdom."

He covered his face with his hands, and slowly the tears trickled over his wan cheeks : he tried to rouse himself, as he murmured, "Yes, Miss Dacres, I can submit ; but my wife, my two boys"—— He could say no more.

"Your wife," Edith replied, "is active, energetic, and a thoroughly good woman : have no fears for her. For the next two years, I will provide for the boys : at the end of that time, they will be able to work for themselves. I have unexpectedly come into possession of some property ; and to what better

use can I apply a part of it than the education of"—— Orphans, she would have said; but the word died on her quivering lips, and the sentence remained unfinished.

Mr. Hale's hands were removed from his face: his eyes were lighted by almost supernatural brightness, as he solemnly said, —

"My God, *thy* will be done!"

In these few words was Edith's reward for patience, effort, and firmness. She saw the mind of the sufferer was now in a state to bear humbly the impending stroke; and her heart beat high with gratitude at the blessed result of her exertions.

A ship was fitting out for the Mediterranean, to sail in November, in which Mr. Courtenay engaged a passage. Active preparations for the voyage immediately commenced; and Edith observed with satisfaction that her mother's efforts at self-government had been so far successful that she aided very energetically her own labors on all necessary occasions.

A heavy burden of care was on Mrs. Courtenay's heart, oppressing her, at times, very severely: but she knew it could be borne, if she exerted herself; and, as she saw Edith's untiring energy, the springs of her character seemed to resume their wonted tension; and she performed her required duties, cheered by the light of her daughter's sympathy and devoted affection.

The time of separation was rapidly approaching.

Edward was to accompany his father, and, if his love of the sea could be conquered, to enter the counting-house of Mr. Granville. Every thing was now ready, the ship to sail on the 11th.

Edith prepared herself for a sad trial on the day of departure, knowing how dreadful it would be to her mother. On the evening previous, the children returned. Mr. Courtenay told them, in the course of their conversation, how abundant were the islands of the Mediterranean in beautiful birds, flowers, &c.; how various the curiosities he should collect for them; and, with many injunctions to be attentive to their mother and sister, dismissed them for the night.

The wind was fair in the morning. Mr. and Mrs. Courtenay went early to Boston. Knowing her mother's grief would be increased by seeing her emotion, Edith determined not to say farewell.

In the evening, Mr. Courtenay returned, as the wind had changed to the eastward, and delayed the ship. When he entered the house, Jenny met him, and said, "I am sorry to see you back, sir."

"Why?" said he: "that is not in your usual style of kind feeling, Jenny."

"Oh, sir! I think it is a very bad sign for any one to return who has once said good-by."

Mrs. Courtenay did not hear this silly remark of Jenny's; but Edith did, and, feeling shocked by her superstitious folly, requested her not to repeat such

nonsense before the children, to impress their young minds so painfully.

The following day, Mr. Courtenay sailed. Although Edith made all exertion to keep calm, yet, when the door closed upon him, she felt chilled to the heart, and, running to her chamber, threw herself on her bed, and burst into an agony of tears. Her power to support the change of prospects for the winter seemed to have forsaken her. She remained some time nearly exhausted ; but God, whose purposes are far beyond human ken, saw fit to inspire her, from the depths of his wisdom, with sudden fortitude. She dashed the tears from her eyes, braced her nerves to meet her mother and the children, and resolutely entered upon the employments of the day.

It was within a week after Mr. Courtenay sailed, when Edith was suddenly summoned by Mrs. Hale, as her husband was evidently worse.

When she entered the room, she observed the change in the sick man's appearance. He appeared glad to see her, though hardly able to speak. A clergyman had been with him. His mind seemed solemnized, and perfectly prepared for the event, which was evidently very near. In broken accents, he thanked his young friend for all her devoted kindness to him, and hoped for a re-union in a "better world."

When she called the next day, he had been dead several hours.

Mrs. Hale told her, on returning the watch, that her husband's eyes had been directed towards it as long as he could see. "It has been," she observed, "a great comfort to him through the autumn; has cheered many hours, which would otherwise have been very dreary. The geranium and rosebush, Miss Dacres, he begged you would accept as his last gift." The poor woman was quite overcome. Edith pressed her hand, deeply touched by her manner, and the remembrance of her humble friend's kind thoughts of her in his last hours.

Mrs. Courtenay had decided to instruct her two daughters during the winter; and Edith had volunteered instruction in drawing and music. Of course, this occupied much of their time; but the evenings were often very sad. There were frequent storms of snow, which, with heavy gales of wind sweeping round the house, made the two lonely beings look in each other's faces for comfort, as the hours dragged wearily along.

An occasional sleigh-ride was all the amusement they had, except the visits of the neighbors, who were very kindly attentive, and solicitous to enliven their solitude; but, at those periods when society would have been most acceptable, the roads were often impassable, and their friends were obliged to remain within the shelter of their own homes.

As the year approached its close, Caroline and Marion seemed rather disconsolate at the remembrance of England and its time-honored festivities.

Christmas was very little regarded in D——; few persons celebrated it; and the day would have passed at Mrs. Courtenay's like other days, but for Jenny's thoughtful decoration of the windows with wreaths of evergreen, and her lamentations, that, "for the first time, no mistletoe-bough could be found for the kitchen."

"A merry Christmas, dear mamma and Edith!" said each child when the morning arrived: but where the *merriment* was, or whence it should come, no one knew; for the elder members of the family were in spirit far away.

"Still," said Mrs. Courtenay, "we are all in good health; and this is abundant cause for gratitude, if not for more joyous feelings."

"Will New Year's Day bring us any gifts, do you think?" inquired Marion.

"I do not believe it will, my child; for I cannot afford to make presents now. We must wait, therefore, until papa returns with his curiosities."

On the 1st of January, 18—, the two young girls wished each other a "*happy* New Year" in a melancholy tone; and, in spite of all their efforts, the big tears rolled over their cheeks. "So different," they exclaimed, "from last year! *Then* we had a nice warm fire to dress by; *now* we are so cold! Oh, how my fingers ache! Mamma and sister will be so dull too!"

"I wish," said Caroline impatiently, "the day was over. But we will go and kiss them." Off

they ran, and were clasped in a warm embrace by both. They looked a little more cheerful as they heard Edith's kind congratulations; waited for her to finish her toilet, and then bounded towards the parlor. What a surprise awaited them! How they danced and capered for joy, as they observed numerous beautiful English toys, books, and fancy articles, spread on the piano!

"Where did they come from? are they for us?" exclaimed both children. Why, mamma said there would be no presents on New Year's Day."

"The box which contained these gifts," Edith said, "arrived only yesterday. Fortunately, you were both out. They came from England by a London ship: they were sent by Grandmamma Harcourt, Margaret, and Mr. Leslie. Of course, they were not expected; and mamma was correct in saying she did not think there would be any presents."

The two girls were delighted beyond description. There was a dress for Jenny, beautiful gifts for their mother and Edith, and so many books! What happiness in reading them aloud would be theirs for a long, long time!

Mrs. Courtenay looked more than usually cheerful in seeing her children so delighted. They thought not of cold: their only regret was, papa and Edward were not with them to share their joy; but they should write, and tell them every thing.

When the first tumult was over, Edith approached Mrs. Courtenay with a box. "This," said she,

"contains a gift I know, dear mamma, you will prize." On opening it, Mrs. Courtenay perceived two beautiful frames, — one enclosing a miniature view of Milton Church and its graveyard; the other, a small basket, in which were delicately arranged the flowers, grass, &c., from the graves of Ellen and Emma, which had been gathered in their last walk to the sacred spot.

The poor mother's heart was full: she turned very pale. Edith feared she had touched a chord which would vibrate too acutely; but, in a few moments, a smile played round Mrs. Courtenay's lips; and, pressing Edith fondly in her arms, she murmured, "My thoughtful, darling girl! how can I sufficiently thank you? Was there ever any one so blessed as I am in having you? O my child! may God reward your devotion to me! These gems will to-day bring before my thoughts, with more than usual vividness, my English home. That church, those withered flowers, — how fraught with sad remembrances! Yet, associated with your affection, dearest Edith, a halo seems to surround them."

The young Courtenays were conscientious children, and, on retiring for the night, were fully aware they had commenced the day in a very wrong spirit. Tears were in Marion's eyes as she said, "Caroline, we were wicked this morning to be so cross. It has been in my mind several times during the day, and I have longed to tell mamma how I

fretted about the cold ; but I did not like to disturb her. What shall we do ?”

“ I think *I* was much worse than you,” replied Caroline ; “ for I am older, and I wished the day over, — a day which has proved so happy a one. But, oh dear ! how hard it is to be good ! It would not be kind to distress mamma to-night, — Edith is reading to her : but we will tell the whole to-morrow ; and do let us try to behave better in future.”

With this wise resolve, they were soon asleep. The next morning, they went to Mrs. Hale’s with a book for each of the boys. The poor little fellows were delighted : it was a ray of sunshine in their sad home.

Edith had not heard from Eliza Sedley for a long time ; and her letters from Arthur had been irregular, from the length of passages at that season. This added to her feelings of gloom ; and very often her eyelids trembled with the tears she could not allow to fall on her cheeks : for her mother had shown so much more firmness than she had expected, had been so unnaturally calm the day her husband sailed, that Edith feared, by any indulgence before her, to awaken her subdued feelings.

It was a cold, bleak morning in the latter part of March, that news came of Mr. Courtenay’s arrival in Malta, “ his health as good as usual, Edward in fine spirits. It was not possible to name any time when he might be expected home ; but he hoped in the early summer.”

There were other letters also, which announced the death of Mr. Leslie. It was addressed to Mrs. Courtenay, that she might break the intelligence to Edith, who had only a note enclosed from Arthur, briefly stating that his father's death was very sudden, — that all particulars must be deferred until the family were more tranquil.

The shock was very great to Edith. She never thought the indisposition of which Arthur had written was any cause of alarm, because, in succeeding letters, there had been but slight allusions to it. This might have been done to spare her any additional anxiety ; and in that light she appreciated it.

Let us feel as we may ; let joy attend our steps, or sorrow darken our path, — *time* speeds on. The sun pursues his daily course, apparently unmindful of individual feeling ; but the record is on high. Our sorrows are not forgotten ; our joyous emotions are all registered ; and we often feel a confidence to pursue our recurring duties, we hardly know why. It was so with Edith and Mrs. Courtenay : one rejoiced in the safety of her husband, the other grieved at her lover's affliction ; but both met the daily claims of those around them calmly and faithfully. Mrs. Courtenay repaid Edith's attention to her by unceasing devotion, and a delicate refinement of tenderness in all her actions ; never invading the privacy of her sorrow, but watching every opportunity to testify her entire sympathy, her deep affection. She realized, in its broadest sense, the sacrifice

Edith must have made in leaving England ; how much she owed her for her unwearying tenderness at sea ; how much, since her residence in the United States, for her interest in the children's improvement, and the uncomplaining spirit with which she bore her separation from Arthur, even at a time when her presence would have been such a comfort to him. But, far from each other as they were, Edith shared, in the depths of her heart, the affliction of her lover ; and the tender pathos of her letters told how affectionate was her sympathy with himself and his sisters. Could the winds have wafted to him the sighs she breathed, the prayers she offered for his restoration to tranquillity, he would have blessed the strength of her affection : it would have lent its aid to support him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"They had told him tales of the sunny lands
Which rose o'er the Indian seas;
Where gold shone sparkling from river sands,
And strange fruit bent the trees:
They had lured him away from his father's hearth,
With its tones of love and its voice of mirth."

By the next arrival from England, Edith learned that Mr. Leslie had appeared languid and feverish for some days before his death, though apparently but little worse than for many previous weeks. At last he was attacked by paralysis, which, ere many hours, terminated his existence.

Arthur wrote with great feeling of his loss, — of the affliction it caused his sisters and Mrs. Leslie. The latter had never failed in her attentions, while his father required any thing to be done. Her exertions had been so perfectly unfaltering, her gentleness so soothing, that they all entertained the highest respect for her.

Mr. Leslie had provided very handsomely for her in his will; and Arthur requested her to remain at Glendale: but this she had declined, and would pro-

bably return to London in a few weeks. He was deeply immersed now in business, taking possession of the farm as its future master. He spoke earnestly of his hopes of a re-union with Edith. She knew he would come to New England when possible ; if not for some time, she should patiently wait, knowing all would, with him, be the result of good judgment and strong affection.

Not long after the arrival of this letter, she was in Boston, executing some commissions for her mother, and, in passing through one of the streets, met a lady looking very pale, but bearing the traces of much beauty, and still in early youth. There was something in the earnest blue eyes and noble brow which suggested associations that were painful, she could not tell why. The lady stopped, and, in a tremulous voice, said, —

“Edith Dacres!” She started, gazed at her, and almost shrieked, —

“Fanny Gordon!”

“No,” said she, with a faint smile: “Mrs. Talbot.”

They were both much agitated. It was some seconds ere they spoke another word. At length Fanny said, “Go with me to my lodgings, that I may briefly explain the mystery of my being here, the cause, &c. You need have no fears, Edith.”

There was such an air of candor and self-respect about her, that Edith felt assured all was right within. The tale was soon told. When Fanny left

school in the manner she did (by bribing a servant to unfasten the gate), it was to meet a lover. They very foolishly, as she acknowledged, went immediately to Scotland ; were married. Lieut. Talbot was an officer in the army under orders for India ; and, determining not to go without her, she rashly consented to the step which, she was aware, would expose her conduct to the imputation of more than imprudence. They remained in retirement until time for the embarkation ; Fanny never leaving her lodgings, except to purchase clothing for the voyage. Her husband, fortunately, had property independently of his pay, by which she could be furnished with all the requirements for a long voyage. During this brief period, she knew nothing of her parents or what might be their feelings, but, with the thoughtlessness of youth and the carelessness of an undisciplined mind, sailed for India, without any attempt to inform them of her fate or receive their forgiveness.

Long before she reached her port of destination, remorse for this want of filial confidence overwhelmed her ; and, but for the undeviating attentions of her husband, she had been perfectly miserable. There were visions of her invalid mother, suffering for her misconduct ; her stern father's indignation at her apparent contempt for all rules of propriety in her elopement ; until, at times, her reflections were hardly to be borne.

She had not been long in India before the climate

made ravages in her naturally fine constitution. Her husband effected an exchange for the British Provinces. They returned to England; and, having already communicated her marriage to her parents by letters, she sought them immediately upon her arrival, with deep contrition for the sorrow she had caused them. She was forgiven; "and," as she continued, "peace was restored to my mind, which, under other circumstances, I had never known. O Edith! there is no love like a mother's, no sin greater than disobedience. We embarked for Halifax. When near, as was supposed, our destined haven, — for the weather was very foggy, — the ship sprung a leak. We made for the nearest port, which proved to be Portland; from whence we came here, to go, as soon as possible, to Nova Scotia. We shall sail in a few days; and I am thankful, dear Edith, for the event, which, by sending us into other than our original port, should have permitted me to see you once more."

Edith could hardly restrain her impatience sufficiently to permit Mrs. Talbot to conclude her narrative, so anxious was she to ask several questions. When the last sentence was finished, instead of expressing sympathy with her friend in the trials through which she had passed, she abruptly inquired, "Did you ever know a Mr. Henderson in India, — an Englishman by birth, but who has lived for a few years in Smyrna?"

• "Mr. Henderson? Assuredly I did. He was the

charm of our little society, — so refined, highly educated, and so gentlemanly! But, Edith, where did *you* know any thing of Mr. Henderson? and why do you ask me about him?"

"Oh!" said Edith, "*you are, you must be*, the Mrs. Talbot of whom he talked so much; and how dull I have been, not sooner to have thought of you!"

Fanny looked bewildered, until Edith told the history of Mr. Henderson's visit at Mr. Courtenay's, his long conversations about her, his admiration of her talents, and the fascination of her manner.

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed Fanny: "my husband used to look a little irritated sometimes when Mr. Henderson was so very polite: but wholly without cause; for, if I did occasionally *appear* like Fanny Gordon, I was always, *at heart*, Mrs. Talbot. When I eloped from a boarding-school, I committed a serious indiscretion; but, if I *flirted* now I am a wife, I should commit little less than a crime. In fact, Edith, I had almost forgotten Mr. Henderson; though he now returns to my memory as a very agreeable person."

The two friends had related to each other all that could interest, and separated with a promise from Fanny that she would visit D—— the next day, with her husband, to say farewell. They came, but only for an hour or two, as they had been requested to be ready to sail on the morrow.

As Edith looked in Fanny's face, she could not help expressing her regret at her loss of color.

"Oh! say nothing of *that*, Edith: a cold climate will soon restore my bloom; but it will still take some time to banish from my mind the sunny memories of my girlhood which come thronging around me, and to restore my self-respect for the anxiety I cost my parents and friends by my imprudence. Were it not for Charles's kindness" (looking affectionately at her husband, who was engaged in conversation with Mrs. Courtenay), "I should not even *now* be very cheerful. But he has great firmness: he has improved me very much. I often call to mind the remark you made at school: 'There are elements of a fine character in Fanny Gordon, and I trust yet for a development of some good.' But, Edith, the fault in my parents was loving me too well; from which cause, I knew no will but my own: I can say no more."

Mrs. Courtenay was quite pleased with both Edith's friends. She found Mr. Talbot well-informed, gentlemanly, and agreeable; while the contrast between the reckless, headstrong girl at Elms Gate, and the quiet, unaffected woman before her, was so great as to fill Edith with wonder, and increase the interest with which she looked upon the pleasant companion of her school-days.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“ He should have died in his own loved land,
With friends and kindred near him ;
Not have perished thus, on a foreign strand,
With no thought save of Heaven to cheer him.
But what recks it now? Is his sleep less sound,
In the isle where the wild winds swept him,
Than if *Home's* green turf his grave had bound,
Or the hearts he loved had wept him? ”

THE middle of April found the spring far in advance of the usual season, and widely different from that of the previous year. The young grass was of an emerald green. Already a few hepaticas had appeared : in the woods, already was seen abundantly the lovely epigæa, that sweet flower so associated with the Pilgrims, as the earliest harbinger of returning warmth and reviving vegetation to those desolate strangers on that storm-beaten coast.

Edith and her mother, among their simple pleasures, often towards evening, the period of calmest thought, indulged in a walk. The two girls usually accompanied them, their favorite stroll being towards the beach, the bold rocks on the shore always subject for admiration and wonder ; for there are few

such in England. And they would often continue gazing on these, and on the ocean, as the tide rolled in, until their minds were filled with the deep sense of infinity which the restless motion and the murmuring sound ever bring to the thoughtful spirit.

In one of those walks, they met, one evening, a gentleman with whom they were acquainted, and, as usual, inquired, "Have there been any arrivals to-day?"

"I believe," answered Mr. P., "there is one from the Mediterranean; but the letters had not been delivered when I left Boston."

Mrs. Courtenay seemed unusually excited, and, grasping Edith's arm, said, "I feel extremely anxious to learn what tidings this ship brings: it may announce the time of Mr. Courtenay's leaving Malta."

Edith looked at her mother affectionately, and, in her usually tender manner, said, —

"Do not be impatient, mamma: to-morrow will certainly bring us letters, and to-morrow will soon be here." She breathed forth these last words with a touching and tremulous earnestness unaccountable to herself; but, from the moment the gentleman had mentioned the arrival of a ship from the Mediterranean, there had been sadness at her heart.

The evening was coming on, and the clouds gathering as if for a change of weather: the air was chill. She wrapped her mother's shawl closely about her; and, taking the hand of Marion, they hurried

homeward, the two girls in fine spirits from the walk and sea-breeze. The evening was spent cheerfully ; for Edith endeavored to shake off the gloomy feeling that was stealing over her, as if the wing of some bird of evil omen had swept by her. Mrs. Lester passed an hour with them ; and, when she left, it was with a promise on Mrs. Courtenay's part to return the visit the next evening. Edith followed her to the door ; and as she saw the clouds had rolled away to the eastward, and the bright stars were glittering in the heavens, the clear sky quite cheered her. She gazed at it with holy awe for a moment : a few prayerful words were on her lips. She returned to the parlor : her mother's countenance wore an expression of deep seriousness, as it always did when she expected letters. Jenny, when she came in with the night-candles, seemed to loiter about the room ; and Edith, alarmed by the idea that she would give utterance to some of her prognostics, more than usually frequent of late, advised her mother to retire. When they met in the morning, both looked weary and careworn : neither seemed desirous of conversation. But, as soon as the morning religious services were over, and breakfast finished, they commenced the lessons with the children ; when Edith, suddenly starting from her seat, exclaimed, " There is a sound of carriage-wheels on the gravel-walk ! Some one has arrived, perhaps with letters ! I will go and see : sit still, mamma, *do*, till I return. Her heart throbbed almost audibly as she left the room ;

an indefinable sense of oppression was on her : but she went towards the stable, whence came two gentlemen, whom she recognized as intimate friends of Mr. Courtenay. She sprang forward, and hastily said, "Have you any news for Mrs. Courtenay?"

A dead silence for a moment.

"Speak, sir! oh, for God's sake, speak! I read in your looks that you bring sad tidings."

The elder gentleman took her hand, and, grasping it as if in agony, said, in a hollow tone, "I have come to tell you that Mr. Courtenay is dead!"

A cry of deep anguish burst from Edith's lips. "Dead! dead! O mamma! mamma and her children! how can I break this overwhelming affliction to them?" She spoke not again : her brain seemed on fire. The crushing of her mother's heart, borne down by such a weight of woe, — oh! how was it to be endured? how was she to support the sight of her grief?

She staggered with the confusion of all these rending thoughts, and was led into the parlor, in the centre of which stood Mrs. Courtenay, rigid as marble, her hands upraised and clasped, as if in supplication to Heaven for pity.

Jenny and the two children were in tears. They had heard Edith's shriek, and knew some dreadful tale had been told. Mrs. Courtenay tried to gain the door; but her feet seemed rooted to the spot, till Edith reached her, when she fell senseless in her arms.

She was conveyed to her chamber, and, for an hour, gave but the faintest signs of life. Edith and her daughters hung over her in a state of feeling not to be described. Mrs. Lester soon arrived, and their united efforts succeeded in restoring animation ; but her mind wandered, as if terror-stricken by some awful event which she could not clearly remember.

Edith gazed on her mother's face with deep earnestness, hoping she would ask some question, from which she could gather a ray of hope that reason was returning ; but the same rigidity of features, the same unnatural wildness in her eyes, continued, and no coherent words escaped her lips. The two girls clung round Edith in such an agony of grief, that her heart was almost broken as she looked from the mother to them. She wrung her hands in actual despair at the prospect before her : not a being but Mrs. Lester on whom she could call for aid or advice ; and how small would be the portion of time she could allow her !

She removed the children from their mother's presence, and then went below to see the gentlemen, and inquire the circumstances of Mr. Courtenay's death. From them she learned that his business had very much exposed him to the weather. In the early part of February, he had taken a violent cold, which increased to lung-fever, and terminated his life, after an illness of ten days. Letters had been received from a friend, at whose house he was ill,

stating all the facts, and giving assurance that he had received every attention which kind feeling could suggest, the best medical advice, and the most devoted attendance from his son.

There were letters from Edward to his mother, expressive of the most tender affection for her and his sisters. He was to remain in the house of Granville and Co. for a time, until he should learn his mother's wishes. These letters Edith read, in order to inform the two gentlemen if any thing was to be done in which they could be of assistance. They took leave with many expressions of sympathy ; and Edith returned to her mother. Mrs. Lester's kindness was of the utmost value to her. She offered to remain that night. Together they watched by the bedside of the poor sufferer, and, towards morning, had the comfort of seeing her sleep.

Days passed ; each successive one adding to Edith's anxieties, and wasting her strength in constant watchfulness of her mother and the children. The former continued very ill for a week, but, at the end of that time, was able to sit up, take some slight nourishment, and read her son's letters. She was very calm ; but her hollow cheek and sunken eye told the tale of her internal suffering. Edith often knelt by her, bathing her hands in her warm tears, or soothing her, in this dark hour, by gentle words of comfort. But how could she point to the future as offering any cheering prospects ? She kept from her the knowledge that Mr. Courtenay, in his last

illness, grieved so much at the separation from his wife and children, and, by these painful regrets, aggravated his disease. Mr. Morgan had informed her of this, and advised her to conceal, as far as possible, every thing which could increase the sorrow of the bereaved one ; and, as Mrs. Courtenay asked very few questions, it was not a difficult task.

When able to see any one out of the family, she was visited by Mr. Harrison, the clergyman of D——, who was truly the embodiment of Goldsmith's village pastor. His presence seemed to diffuse tranquillity around ; and the children learned to watch for his step, in the belief their mother would be better after seeing him. His spirit was so gentle, his words of comfort so hopeful, his *faith* so fervent, it was impossible to be in his presence without feeling its sanctifying influence. His words fell on the stricken heart like dew upon the parched earth.

Caroline and Marion often stood by him, gazing earnestly in his face, as he would relate to them incidents of his early life, when he struggled, with his widowed mother, to earn a scanty support for his little brothers. The trials they had endured were borne calmly and heroically, because they had always a firm reliance on the goodness of God, and his promise to be a father to the fatherless. Many a day had dawned with hardly money enough in the house to furnish one meal. His sorrowing mo-

ther would smile through her tears, and say, "Keep up your spirits, my son : we are not forsaken." And it proved so ; for her patient endurance, her religious faith, had their reward ; and, ere the close of life, she saw her sons amply provided for by their honest industry, and was herself blessed by a competence.

The season was one of peculiar loveliness. Every thing in the vegetable world seemed rejoicing in renewed existence. To many minds this would have been doubly sad ; but not so to Edith or her mother, to whom spring appeared as a type of immortality ; and, if denied the sad privilege of visiting Mr. Courtenay's grave, adorned as it now must be in the beautiful island where he rested, it seemed not a place of cold banishment, but of sweet repose. They could not help feeling that he would have a consciousness of the soft airs which played around him ; that he would hear the song of the birds, and love each opening leaf and flower, as they did.

However visionary this might seem to others, it was comfort to them ; and often, as twilight stole softly over the landscape, blending all things in such beautiful harmony, their hearts, in unison, would breathe forth an aspiration of love to the memory of the dear departed.

We have said but little of Jenny during this period of sorrow ; but her unobtrusive excellence must not be forgotten. She was, if possible, more

devoted than ever to her mistress and Edith ; anticipating every wish, — creeping noiselessly about the house, lest her footsteps would disturb its sad quietude. She was often in tears ; and the children frequently sat with her for an hour, delighting to talk of their father, and listening to instances of his benevolence which occurred before they were old enough to remember them.

She could not resist saying to Edith, “ Do you remember telling me I was foolish to talk as I did, when my master came back, the day he expected to sail ? You called it superstitious nonsense ; but it *proved* a bad sign.

“ No proof at all, Jenny, that you were otherwise than superstitious. You cannot believe your saying what you did had any thing to do with the death of Mr. Courtenay.”

“ I don’t know any thing about *that* : I only say it was a bad sign, and I shall *stick* to it.”

“ Ah, well, Jenny ! you must, I presume, have your own way, even at the expense of your personal comfort ; but do not prophesy any more sorrows, I beg, for mamma’s sake.”

“ Suppose I do, Miss Edith : if there’s *nothing* in them, it’s no matter.”

Edith smiled at Jenny’s logic, and left her. As she closed the door, Jenny murmured to herself, “ I wonder what she calls the weight on her spirits that she had the night before we heard of master’s death. That’s not *superstition*, I suppose, but a *presentiment*.

Superstition for the kitchen, and presentiments for the parlor! Still, if she is an unbeliever, I wish there were more Miss Ediths in the world. What could we have done without her? So devoted to her mother, so fond of the two young ladies, and so gentle with me, — except when I talk of signs; and then how she looks at me with those great black eyes!”

Edith was not aware, in all probability, that the depression under which she sometimes labored had in it a slight tendency to superstition, or, at least, to the indulgence of a belief, that, often before any great event occurs, we seem to have a foreshadowing of it.

Not many weeks after the news of Mr. Courtenay's death, letters were received from Mr. Henderson. He had learned the sad tidings in Philadelphia, and immediately wrote Mrs. Courtenay, expressing himself with the deepest sympathy in her affliction, and with equal tenderness for the memory of her husband's great virtues, — the irreparable loss he must be to his family, as guide, example, and protector. He dwelt with much earnestness on his happy visit at D——; gratefully acknowledging the kindness he had received, and hoping he might see the family once more before he sailed for Smyrna. Edith was gratified by a respectful remembrance of herself. Associating Mr. Henderson with many pleasant reminiscences, she joined her mother in admiration of his talents and excellent feelings whenever he was

mentioned. She was commissioned to reply to his letters, as Mrs. Courtenay was unequal to the effort. She described in glowing colors her meeting with Mrs. Talbot; the additional pleasure she had in finding the being in whom she had felt so strong an interest was a friend of her school-days; and concluded by hoping Mr. Henderson might be able to visit D—— again before he left the United States.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“But thou, O Hope! with eyes so fair,
What was thy delighted measure?
For still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes in distance hall.”

“My dear Edith,” said Mrs. Courtenay, one morning, “I feel as if it were necessary for me to rouse myself to something like thought for the future, dark and gloomy as it now appears. A widow!” The oppression at her heart for an instant checked the utterance of another syllable. In that one word was concentrated all of human affliction; but she struggled to proceed.

“I am left, I presume, with no property but my cousin’s legacy; as Mr. Courtenay told me his chief reason for going to Malta was to possess a certainty of business, all his property having been barely sufficient to pay his liabilities when he failed. His creditors, I think, are all paid. This is, of course, a great comfort to me. No one, I believe, suffers from his misfortunes; but how are my children and

myself to be supported on my now very small income? It is not what it was in England" ——

"Say not another word, dearest mamma!" exclaimed Edith, interrupting her, and throwing her arms round her. "I am rich, the undisputed mistress of nearly ten thousand dollars, now the loan is paid. This will do for us all until I am" — *married*, she would have said; but the recent lesson of the uncertainty of all earthly expectations checked the word ere it fell from her lips, and in its place gushed forth tears she could not check.

"My noble, generous girl, my dear Edith! I never can consent to that. But I find I am hardly able yet to think very steadily: we will say no more at present."

"Mamma," said Marion, "what are we to do without papa? There is nobody to take care of us."

"Yes, my child, there is. It was God's pleasure, for wise purposes, to take your father; but *He* is left to us, and has promised to watch over the widow and orphan: we must all trust in *Him*. Have no fears, Marion: we shall be provided for, — taken care of, as you say. Do you remember the interesting things Mr. Harrison told you, — of his mother's *trust*, and his own industry? Caroline and yourself must be studious, and make every exertion to acquire a good education; for the time may come when all your capabilities will be called into action. We must all try to relinquish some of the indulgences

we had during papa's life. They were not numerous then ; but they must be fewer now."

The family returned to the quiet routine of everyday life with feelings subdued, but no longer gloomy or desponding. Mrs. Courtenay had disciplined her mind to a degree of patient submission beautiful to witness. She might be daily seen instructing her children, conversing tranquilly with Edith, or repeating her orders to Jenny, with such external calmness as to impress awe upon those who witnessed her efforts.

Mr. Harrison often came to see her ; and the attentions of Mrs. Lester, as well as of many other neighbors, were undeviating : in fact, her situation had called forth so much sympathy and tenderness, that she would often say, " I could not have found warmer friends in my native land. How I shall always love and respect the warm-hearted Americans ! "

On one occasion, when Mrs. Courtenay and Edith were with the children in her chamber, Jenny came hastily in, saying, " Miss Edith, some one wishes to see you in the parlor ; and, superstition or no superstition, I think it's a good sign."

" Who is it ? " said Edith.

" A stranger," replied Jenny, and closed the door.

" Mamma, I think it must be Mr. Henderson : you know he promised to see us, if possible, before his return." And, as Edith pronounced these words, a slight blush overspread her cheeks at the remem-

brance of the interest she knew he had felt for her. She hardly wished to see him, but knew she must. So, summoning all her courage to her aid, she darted down stairs, opened the parlor door, and, with a wild scream of delight, was clasped in Arthur's arms.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"I must go o'er the sea to other lands :
It is the call of duty. But fear not :
I shall return ; and then our loves are sure.
Dream not of danger on the sea : one Power
Protects us always, and the honest heart
Fears not the tempest."

IN order to account for Arthur's sudden appearance in D——, it will be necessary to return to England and to Glendale.

After he graduated, which he did with the first honors in his class, he deferred for a time the commencement of a profession, to devote himself to his father, whose increasing indisposition required constant attention, even before the symptoms became alarming.

The circumstances connected with Mr. Leslie's death have already been related. Soon after the last duties had been paid, and Arthur became heir to the estate of Glendale, his tenantry, in token of their attachment, assembled to "do him honor," as they termed it, in front of the house, and, with uncovered heads, offered condolence for his parent's loss, and

would have evinced, by outward demonstrations, their joy at his accession to the property ; but he stepped forward, and, after gracefully thanking them for their evidence of kind feeling, checked all attempts at noisy manifestations of pleasure. He told them the loss of his father was irreparable. That father had been his guide and counsellor during his boyhood, his friend and companion in youth. In his footsteps he hoped to follow, in endeavoring to promote the happiness of his tenantry. Their wants he would be ever ready to relieve, their grievances to redress, to the utmost of his power. They should be allowed all the privileges consistent with the preservation of good order ; and, in return, he should require observance of his rules, — temperance, orderly conduct, careful cultivation of their little farms, &c. Any opposed to his regulations had liberty to go whenever they pleased.

He bowed, and entered the house. Instead of the loud cheer and boisterous shout, there fell upon his ear, as he retired, a murmured sound of “God bless the young landlord !”

From that period, Arthur was deeply engaged in business, with little time for rest ; though many a fond feeling was wafted towards the Western shores, and Edith’s image ever mingled with his dreams. To accomplish settling the estate was now doubly important, as, at the close of his labors, he hoped to go to the United States, unless some probability occurred of the Courtenays’ return to England. He

was almost disheartened when Edith's letter announced Mr. Courtenay's departure for the Mediterranean. He was well aware, that, under these circumstances, she would never leave her mother. He also knew the weight of anxiety which would devolve on her, when she felt herself the only person to whom Mrs. Courtenay could look for sympathy, or indeed companionship, during her husband's absence. His father's affairs were left in very good order ; but there was a vast amount of business to arrange, new leases to be made out, deeds to be examined, legacies to be paid, his sister's property to be re-invested, Mrs. Leslie's jointure to be remitted, &c., all requiring time and personal attention.

Mrs. Harcourt he saw whenever he was able to leave home ; but that did not often occur. She sent for him one day, informing him of some papers in her possession which she thought might be of importance to Mrs. Courtenay. On his arrival in Milton, she showed him a package, which appeared to contain a legal document, accompanied by some letters ; but, of course, he could learn nothing from their direction. In answer to his immediate inquiries, he learned that the next ship would sail for Boston in not less than a fortnight (it must be remembered there were no steamers, and but few packets, then) ; and he took charge of the package, to forward it, with his own letters, when the time should arrive.

His business matters were drawing to a close : the amount of property for himself was thirty thousand

pounds, independently of Glendale Farm ; for each of his sisters, ten thousand pounds. Mary was to be married at the expiration of her mourning, as she resolutely refused to think of a wedding while her heart grieved, as it then did, at the recent death of her father.

At this time, the sad news of Mr. Courtenay's death reached England by letters to Mr. Granville, who had arrived but recently.

Arthur was inexpressibly shocked : deep commiseration for Mrs. Courtenay, anxiety almost amounting to agony for Edith, determined him to go immediately to Boston.

Mrs. Leslie had not left Glendale ; and she consented to remain with Mary and Matilda until Arthur's return, which he thought would not be prolonged beyond four months. He procured an agent to take care of his estate ; bade farewell to Mrs. Harcourt and Margaret Granville, who loaded him with letters, messages, &c. ; and sailed in the next ship.

The passage was short for those times, — twenty-three days. On landing, he learned from the British consul where Mrs. Courtenay's house was situated, and, with the speed of a lover, soon reached it.

Jenny admitted him, and would have screamed but for his raising his hand towards her mouth, and putting a finger on his own lips. "Dear, dear!" she whispered as he entered the parlor: "what will Miss Edith say? I've had a bright feeling all this

morning : I knew something would happen. I do wonder if she will call this *superstition* or *presentiment*, — my feeling so bright ! ”

“ Hush, Jenny ! and run for Miss Dacres : say not a word as to who it is.”

We have seen how faithfully she executed her mission. To account for Jenny’s “ bright feeling,” we must say, it probably was the result of clear air and warm sunshine, which for some days had been strangers ; but poor Jenny, since her arrival at D——, had indulged more than ever in signs and omens about every thing.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time would but make thee more dear.
Oh! the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turned when he rose."

It was some time ere Edith recovered from the agitation into which she had been thrown by Arthur's sudden appearance. She was pale, even to ghastliness, and so completely overcome as to be scarcely able to speak. Her feelings, at length, found relief in a shower of tears. Arthur was distressed at the effect of his unexpected arrival: but, as he told her, he had no other course to pursue, unless he waited for the next packet; "and I do believe, Edith, you would prefer to be a little alarmed, than have my appearance delayed a fortnight later, — how is it?" She smiled a reply. Could he have fully realized the joy, the relief, his presence brought, he would have been amply repaid for all he had endured when separated from her.

“But, Arthur,” she soon said, “in our happiness, we must not forget mamma’s sorrow. I will go to her, and bring her to you. She is sadly altered ; but you will not, I know, appear to notice it.”

Poor Mrs. Courtenay was indeed altered. Her deep mourning-dress and widow’s cap, while they changed her whole appearance, threw a great interest over her ; and as she entered the room, leaning on Edith’s arm, Arthur thought he had never seen a figure which impressed him with such reverence. He kissed her pale cheek with deep emotion ; and, while his eyes glistened with the moisture he wished not to check, he gently and affectionately led her thoughts to England, to Mrs. Harcourt, and the many letters for herself and daughters.

He then presented the package, which seemed to excite Mrs. Courtenay’s surprise. Unable to surmise its contents, she requested Edith to open the document, while she read the letter.

In a moment, a great change passed over her face. She trembled, yet not as in distress. Ere she could have finished the letter, Edith threw down the paper, and, clasping her mother’s neck, exclaimed, in a tumult of joy, “Mamma ! God be praised for all his goodness to us !”

Mrs. Courtenay looked up with an expression of intense gratitude, as she said, reverently, —

“Oh, may I indeed be grateful, humble as I ought to be ! From this letter, I learn the death of my aunt, whom I have not seen for many, many years.

She died unmarried, and has left me five thousand pounds, as her nearest relative, — a bestowment as wholly unexpected to me as if she had never lived; for she disapproved my having married an American." This turn of fortune was most gratefully received by all: mingled, however, with the joy, was the memory of Mr. Courtenay. How happy he would have been, could he have lived to see his family so independent as it regarded property, — anxiety for the future removed! But they all meekly bowed in submission to Him who gave the blow, in the firm belief it was directed by unerring Wisdom and Goodness. Events had crowded so rapidly on our friends, that, towards evening, all looked wearied by excitement and deep thoughts.

Edith seemed almost bewildered with joy; and, as she saw Arthur looking earnestly at her, she more than once said, "Are the events of to-day a dream?"

"I am sure I hope not," he said; "for, after all the anxiety we both have had, the tedious days that have passed since that sad morning when I saw you on the deck of the 'Galatea,' the weary night-watches I had while you were at sea, if my present happiness be a dream, Edith, I pray not to awaken."

After the lapse of a few days, when the minds of Edith and her mother were tranquillized, Arthur consulted their wishes about an immediate return to England. It was his desire to be married before leaving the United States, and that the family should

accompany him. Mrs. Courtenay could not hasten her removal, as a ship was expected from Malta, by which her husband's papers, &c., were to be sent. Then the furniture was to be sold, the house to be relinquished, &c., which could not be done until after the arrival of the ship. Edith would not consent to leave her mother in America ; nor would she be married at present, out of respect to the memory of Mr. Courtenay, who had been as a parent to her.

Arthur was desirous of seeing some of the world-renowned scenery of the United States. After various arrangements, it was at length decided he should go to Washington, Cincinnati, &c., and return by the Falls of Niagara, stopping a short time in New York. The season was beautiful for the tour ; and, while he descanted to Edith upon the sublime and beautiful scenery they should so much enjoy together, she said, "I know, dear Arthur, all the delight it would give me ; I can imagine no higher enjoyment than to be with you amid such rich and varied scenes ; I know I need the change, for I have had much care and sorrow for one so young : but the other side of the picture is my *widowed* mother, with only her two children at home ; or, indeed, only one, if Caroline went with us. You must not urge it, as I do so reluctantly refuse any request which you make ; but my sense of duty tells me I ought to forego the enjoyment of this tour, for the sake of one who has been so deeply afflicted, and who still needs

me. Arthur said no more : he respected this stern idea of right.

He remained a week or two at D——, during which Edith, her mother, and the children accompanied him in drives all round the beautiful country near Boston, which hitherto they had had few opportunities of enjoying. Jenny had her share of pleasure also ; for Arthur brought a man-servant with him, who was often her attendant. She well deserved to be remembered in the way of kindness ; for there was no pause in her devotedness to Mrs. Courtenay or the children.

They all visited Nahant, — explored its various claims to wonder and admiration. Arthur's love of nature was not less enthusiastic than Edith's ; and he could hardly find words to express his emotions as he looked upon the grandeur of the scenery around him. Every day, the family were more and more impressed by the beauty of the views in New England.

Arthur often rallied Edith on her strong American principles, her admiration of the bold rocks, the ocean, &c. Sometimes he playfully told her, he feared she would regret leaving them. She looked at him with a serene, steadfast look, and uttered, in her sweet voice, the single word, "Glendale." It spoke volumes ; and his eyes beamed on her with perfect happiness at the prospect of her sharing with him that home, so dear to both as the scene of their early lives ; where together, in the freshness of youth,

they had enjoyed so much in rambling through woods, gathering wild flowers, or lingering on the grassy banks of the brooks, watching their miniature falls over the rocky beds. The visits to the cottages were to be renewed: they should be abundantly able to assist the worthy poor, to aid the sick, and comfort the afflicted.

There were visions of the library in winter evenings, the cheerful fire, the closed windows and drawn curtains, the book, and the evening service, with the household around them; and, above all, there would be, Arthur knew, humble and grateful hearts bowing at the throne of the Giver of all good. In all these anticipations, Mrs. Courtenay, the two girls, and Jenny had their places: no happiness could be very great unshared by them. Arthur still loitered in D—— until after the ship had arrived from the Mediterranean; and then there was so much to enjoy in his walks, drives, and horseback-rides, he almost dreaded to leave.

The beautiful weather, so different from the fogs among which he had lived, — how he enjoyed it! In an excursion, one morning, when every thing in nature seemed so much in harmony with their feelings, Edith inquired if he had abandoned his plan of studying for the ministry.

“I fear I must, as, when my thoughts were directed towards the church, I had no idea I should so soon be the master of Glendale, and have so many cares and duties to perform. It now appears to me

impossible to become a clergyman, and retain the guardianship of my tenantry, without neglecting one of the claims on my time and attention: add to which, there are so many young clergymen to whom the living of Glendale would be valuable, that I *now* should feel it wrong to think of it as my future field of labor. Together, Edith, we can do a great deal for the happiness of those around us, and, by our example, reclaim the erring, strengthen the weak, and encourage the timid; while the rector of Glendale will, I hope, be one, who, —

‘ In duty prompt at every call,’ —

will —

‘ Watch and weep and pray and feel for all;
Try every art; reprove each dull delay;
Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way.’

I remember, Goldsmith’s picture of a country clergyman is your beau-ideal of human excellence; and I feel as you do about it.”

“There are such men,” said Edith, as the tears rose to her eyes: “the good clergyman of D—— is one. Could you have witnessed all his tenderness to mamma during the first hours of her bereavement, his fondness for Caroline and Marion, his efforts to subdue their grief, you would love and respect him as I do. I shall grieve to part with him, and our dear, excellent Mrs. Lester.”

“Let us hope, then, they may visit England, when we will both show our grateful remembrance of their

kindness in the proffered hospitalities of Glendale Farm. It assuredly will be my greatest happiness to prove my attachment to you by showing respect to all who, in any way, lightened your anxieties during our separation."

"There have been other things, Arthur, which have cheered me: dear indeed have they been when my heart sunk at mamma's grief. The miniature and the ring, — talismanic has been their power when the wind howled in dismal tones round our house last winter; when I thought of the stormy ocean between us; the uncertainty of our ever meeting again; and witnessed mamma's saddened expression, as she read my thoughts. I have often, unperceived by her, kissed the ring; and a smile has been on my lips, — a bright, hopeful feeling in my heart."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Flow on for ever in thy glorious robe
Of terror and of beauty; yea, flow on;
Unfathomed and resistless! God hath set
His rainbow on thy forehead, and the cloud
Mantled around thy feet. And he doth give
Thy voice of thunder power to speak of him
Eternally; bidding the life of man
Keep silence, and upon thine altar pour
Incense of awe-struck praise." — L. H. SIGOURNEY.

ARTHUR left D—— for his tour: there were neither tears nor sighs; for all were anxious he should have a privilege so valuable, of seeing the western cities, the capital of the United States, and the Falls. During his absence, the family of Mrs. Courtenay had ample occupation for heart and hand, in preparations for a sale of furniture, and the necessary arrangements for another passage across the Atlantic. Caroline and Marion had made many pleasant acquaintances, and were very popular with the young people of the neighborhood. They prepared a bestowment for all, on each of which was sealed a promise of remembrance. They were saddened by the thought, they should probably never meet again.

The melancholy duty of examining Mr. Courtenay's papers had been performed before Arthur left: all the business affairs were adjusted, as his clear head and strong mind suggested many things not likely to occur to a lady.

The approaching departure of the Courtenay family caused quite a sensation in the beautiful town where they had resided for more than a year. Mrs. Courtenay's benevolence and lady-like dignity had gained for her friends in all classes. When first among them, she had contrived, with very limited means, to assist the needy, to prepare little comforts for the sick, &c. ; and Edith, with her expressive countenance, and graceful, dignified movements, her gentle tones and patient ministries, had soothed many an aching head, and whispered peace to many a troubled heart.

They had come, mother and adopted daughter, as strangers in a strange land ; they had found warm friends in the day of sorrow ; and they should part with deep regret on both sides. America was the land of Mr. Courtenay's birth: he had loved his country with the enthusiasm peculiar to the nation, and to leave it for ever was a trial to the sorrowing wife ; but the brief space of happiness she had enjoyed with him there was a treasured remembrance.

Six weeks had passed since Arthur left. His letters were filled with glowing descriptions of all he saw: his manly nature knew how to appreciate

American character and American institutions. He saw prosperity throughout the land, genuine and noble independence in the heart.

He felt it would be profanation to attempt a description of the Falls of Niagara: their grandeur was overwhelming; and, as he expressed himself, "My only feeling as regarded *self*, when I stood gazing on this stupendous cataract, was, how insignificant and humble do I feel in sight of this mighty mass of waters, and the glorious scenery around! It would be needless, dearest Edith, to speak further of my emotions; my mind is agitated and exhausted: but the time will, I hope, come, when I can converse with you more clearly on these wonders."

Arthur returned to find every thing nearly ready. They were to return in the "Galatea." This would be delightful, as Capt. Henly still commanded her.

The most important part was now at hand. Edith had consented to be married, as privately as possible, a few days before sailing: her mourning was to be laid aside for that occasion. Her birthday — her nineteenth — had passed while Arthur was absent, or it would have been in accordance with romance to have been married on that day; but Edith's life had been rather too full of stern realities to feel disturbed by this deviation from *novel* rules.

Jenny had, as usual, a fear of *something*; and, as she could conjure up no *real* cause for anxiety, she at length conjectured Edith would be married with her mother's wedding-ring, as she had always seen

her wear it. This, she was certain, would be a bad sign ; but Arthur had guarded against an omen so disastrous.

The morning dawned gloriously, — just such a morning as we sometimes have in August. A veil of mist hung over the landscape, softening and subduing the summer heat, as well as its vivid colors.

Edith was attired in a simple white muslin : her beautiful hair was encircled by a wreath of orange blossoms, and shadowed by a veil, except upon the brow. The two Courtenays, who were as sisters to her, were to be her only bridesmaids. Caroline was now a tall, fine-looking girl.

Just before she left the parlor for the carriage, she called Arthur to look at a book open upon the table, in which were carefully pressed some wild roses, and under them written, “ My seventeenth birthday : *his* gift.” “ These flowers, Arthur,” she said, “ have been my companions in all my little trials, in all my *great* griefs.”

He placed his arm round her, and said, in tones tremulous from emotion, “ Edith, the words I then uttered I will faithfully indorse.”

Edith then turned to Caroline and Marion, and, presenting to each a small package, said, “ This is in remembrance of *Sister Edith.*”

A few friends accompanied the wedding-party to church. After the ceremony, they returned to D——, and then left for several days on a short tour. The two girls opened the packages : they were found to

contain a deed of gift for one thousand dollars each, to be devoted to their education under the best instructors. Edith knew their mother's property would not allow very expensive instruction ; and it was a source of grateful pleasure to be thus enabled to furnish them with money to have the best masters in drawing, music, and French. Jenny received a present of one hundred dollars, in testimony of gratitude for her attention to Mrs. Courtenay and herself. " I give it you in gold," said Edith, " as you have now, I think, been sufficiently long in this country to associate *bright* feelings with the American eagle."

On her return, Edith visited her *poor* friends, making liberal donations to all from Arthur's purse. They remained in the house a day or two. The furniture, it was decided, could be sold after the family left, as Mr. Lester had kindly offered to arrange the sale.

The day of departure came. Friends were left on the wharf whom they hardly dared hope to see again, and around whom clustered so many of life's choicest sympathies and affections, that they could not repress their tears.

As the bride and bridegroom stood on the quarter-deck, a murmur of admiration was heard, elicited by the surpassing loveliness of the one, and the manly elegance of the other.

They gazed for a long time on the receding buildings in Boston, the wharves, — Arthur without his

hat, in token of respect for the people who so kindly had welcomed his friends and himself to the shores of New England.

Little now remains to be said., The "Galatea" had a delightful passage. The arrival in the Thames was hailed with mingled feelings. Poor Mrs. Courtenay rested her head on Edith's neck as the ship anchored off Tilbury Fort: the children clasped her hands in mute recognition of her sorrow. Arthur begged her to go below. He went on shore to order a carriage, and returned in an hour. Mrs. Courtenay preferred to go to Mrs. Harcourt's, who was in good health, and Margaret full of joy at the return of her young friends.

When the meeting was over in Milton, Arthur and Edith went immediately to Glendale, having previously despatched the man-servant to announce their arrival. As they approached the village, the church-bells rang out a marriage-peal. This informed the tenantry of their landlord's return. They left their work to welcome the happy couple to their home. This time, Arthur did not refuse their congratulations; and Edith, bending her beautiful head from the carriage-window, kissed her hand to all.

Mary, Matilda, and Mrs. Leslie were in the hall; and, after cordially embracing each, Edith advanced, when a fair girl suddenly stepped from the library, and she was clasped to the warm heart of Eliza Sedley.

She had been visiting in the neighborhood; and

Mary had begged her to come to Glendale, as Edith was so soon expected. Could aught have been added to her happiness, it was this union with her school-day friend, who remained some time with her. From Eliza she learned Mrs. Lanmeer's death, and many interesting events connected with Elms-gate House.

Mary Leslie was soon married, as the preparations for the wedding had only been deferred until her brother's return. She went with Sir George to Thornton House, his country-seat in Devonshire, to pass the remainder of the summer. Matilda accompanied the bridal-party, and was to divide her time between her two sisters. Mrs. Leslie returned to her friends in London, under promise of often visiting Glendale, as if still a home. Her attentions to Mary and Matilda during Arthur's absence had been so uniform, her general deportment so marked by dignity and refinement, that the household saw her depart with great regret.

Mrs. Courtenay, with her daughters, very soon removed to a cottage *ornée* in Glendale, near the rustic bridge, where Arthur and his wife still love to pause, and watch the stream falling over its bed of rocks, as in their early days. Edward Courtenay, entirely cured of his love of the sea, became, at twenty-one, a junior partner in the house of Granville and Co., and the husband of Margaret.

We must not forget our friend Jenny, who, notwithstanding her omens and signs, was married on Friday, and in a heavy rain ; her husband elect telling

her they would break the charm by proving a marriage could be happy, though the wedding-day was one she had hitherto regarded with so little favor.

The geranium and rosebush bloomed in the greenhouse at Glendale.

THE END.



